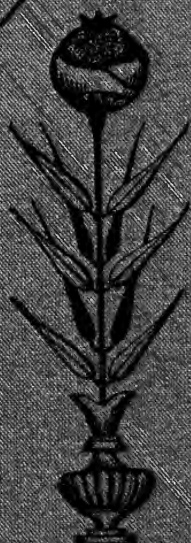
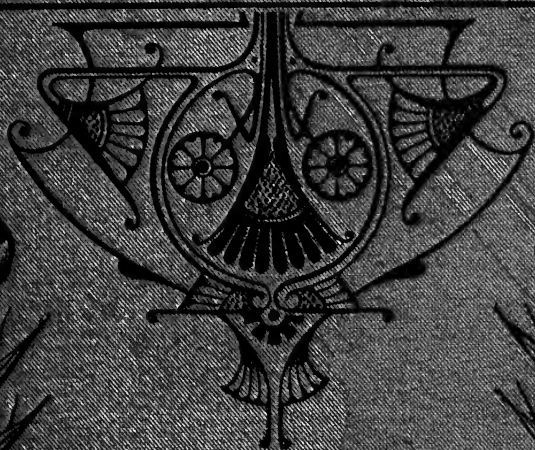


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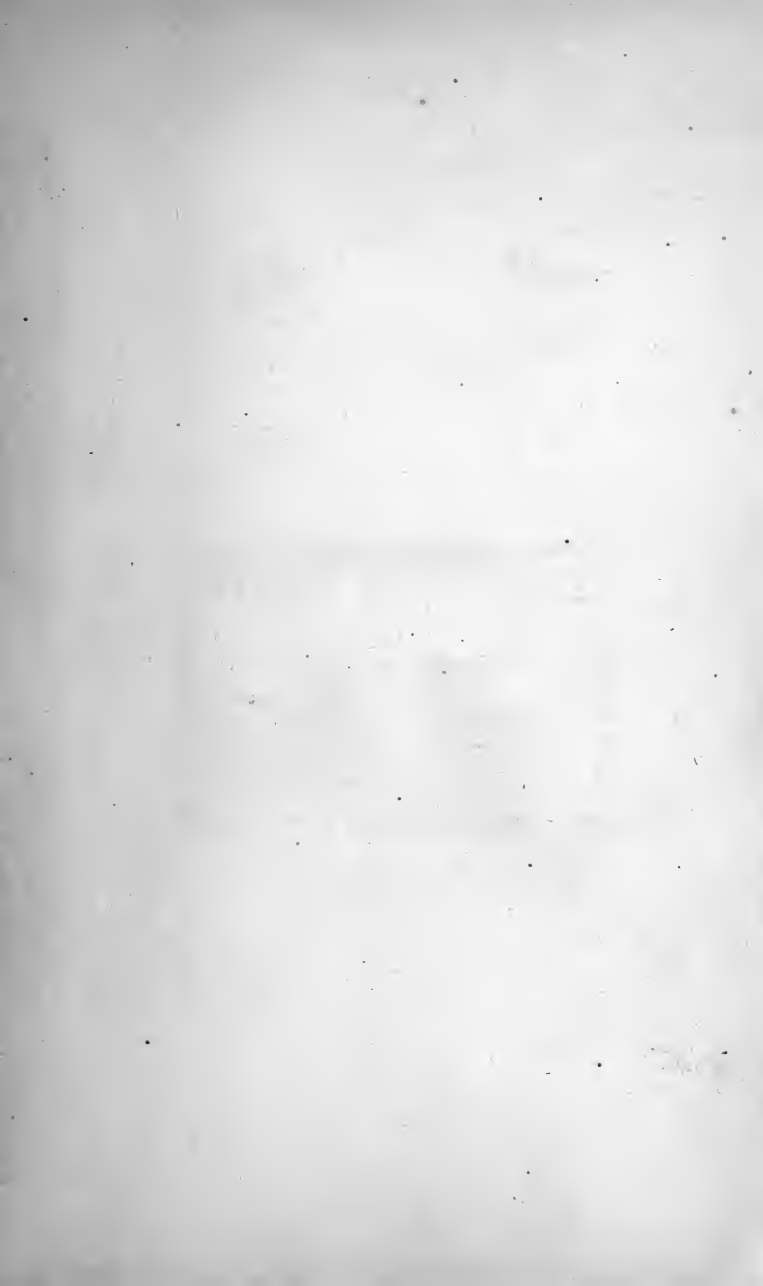


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N. Adams.

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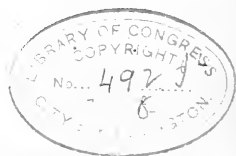
DISCOURSES

BY

✓
NEHEMIAH ADAMS D. D.,

. SENIOR PASTOR OF UNION CHURCH, BOSTON.

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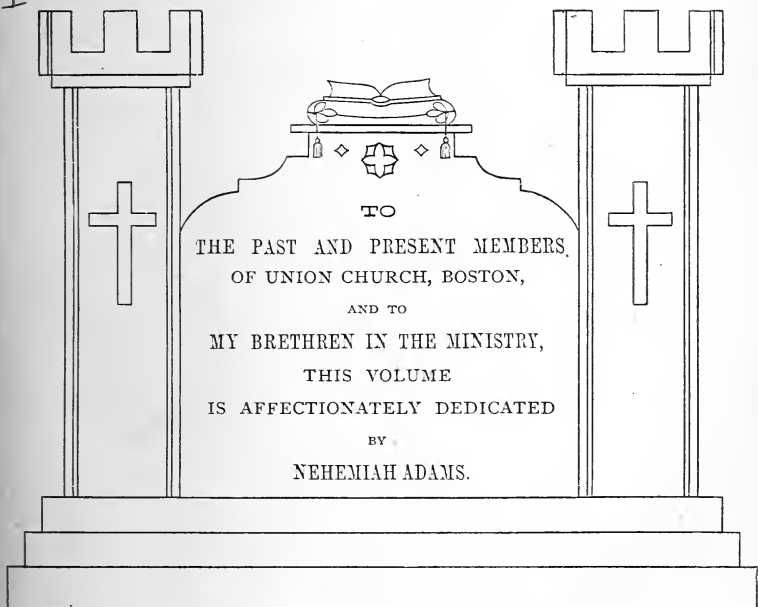
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THE
JOURNAL OF
JAMES M. SMITH
1846-1847
PUBLISHED BY THE
AMERICAN GEOGRAPHICAL SOCIETY
NEW YORK
1848

INTRODUCTORY NOTE.



THE PUBLICATION OF THIS VOLUME OF SERMONS, — ALL PREACHED NEAR THE CLOSE OF AN ACTIVE MINISTRY OF NEARLY FIFTY YEARS, — IS ENTIRELY DUE TO THE FOLLOWING KIND AND COMPLIMENTARY LETTERS:

CORRESPONDENCE.



CHARLESTON, SOUTH CAROLINA. }
January 22, 1874. }

REV. NEHEMIAH ADAMS D. D.,
Boston, Mass.

Dear Sir and Brother:

The undersigned, Ministers of the Gospel and Pastors of congregations in this city, remember with sentiments of unfeigned gratitude and pleasure, the visit you paid to our city, and the services you performed in our several churches, whilst you were the guest of your honored son, our esteemed brother in Christ, Rev. WILLIAM H. ADAMS.

The frequent allusions to the pleasure and profit which your numerous friends derived from your ministrations whilst among us, have suggested the propriety of a more tangible memorial of these services than our unaided memories afford; hence we have concluded to ask—if consistent with your

views — for the publication of the sermons preached in the different Churches, and in the Orphans' Chapel of this city, as well as those which have been prepared for several occasions when the delivery of them was prevented by Providential interpositions.

In addition to the treasure we hope to possess in having your labors in this place reduced to this permanent form, we also desire on our part, to bear grateful testimony to your eminent services for the truth as it is in Jesus.

For the space of half a century your voice and pen have been most industriously employed in defence of "the faith once delivered unto the saints," and in your hands the Gospel trumpet has never given an uncertain sound.

We would therefore feel honored in having our churches and ourselves connected, however remotely, with the history of a servant of Christ so justly distinguished as yourself.

* * * * *

In making this request, we would also cherish the hope that the publication of a book written by a Boston Divine, and its publication solicited by Charleston Ministers, may tend to the promotion of that "peace on earth and good will toward men," which is such a cardinal element in our holy religion, and such an important desideratum in our common country.

With prayers for your continued health and use-

fulness, and with considerations of highest respect and esteem,

We remain,

Yours in the Gospel,

W. S. BOWMAN,	{ Pastor of the Wentworth St. Lutheran Church.
J. L. GIRARDEAU,	{ Pastor of Zion Presbyte- rian Church, Glebe St.
C. S. VEDDER,	{ Pastor of the Huguenot Church.
J. A. CHAMBLISS,	{ Pastor of the Citadel Square Baptist Church.
G. R. BRACKETT,	{ Pastor of the Second Pres- byterian Church.
RICH'D D. SMART,	{ Pastor of the Spring St. M. E. Church, South.
J. T. WIGHTMAN,	{ Pastor of the Bethel M. E. Church, South.
W. C. DANA,	{ Pastor of the Central Pres- byterian Church.
T. W. DOSH,	{ Pastor of St. John's Evan- gelical Lutheran Church.
L. H. SHUCK,	{ Pastor of the First Baptist Church.

REPLY.



BOSTON, February 3, 1874.

*To the REV. W. S. BOWMAN and others, Pastors of
Evangelical Churches in Charleston, S. C.,*

DEAR BRETHREN:

Your letter of January 22, was read by me with a truly grateful heart. Your names, each of them, are associated with pleasurable recollections of personal intercourse which can never fade from my memory, and your references to my visit among you last year will be a constant source of pleasure. The request which you so kindly make for the Sermons which I preached to your congregations shall be considered. Meanwhile accept the assurance of my warmest affection, with prayers for your continued prosperity.

Most truly,

Your friend and brother in Christ,

N. ADAMS.

*Letter from the REV. PROF. PHELPS of Andover
Theological Seminary.*

ANDOVER, MASS., February 7, 1876.

N. ADAMS, D. D.:

Dear Brother,

I am not sure that this letter is not a "twice told tale," — the object of it has been so often in my mind. I have read to-day, for my own comfort one of your own sermons in the volume "Christ a Friend," and it suggests to me as your books have done a hundred times before, the query whether you have not among your manuscript sermons, many which if published, would be an addition to our homilitic literature. I have for many years recommended your sermons to my classes as illustrating a department of that literature which few sermons in the language illustrate as well. I have only wished that we had more of them in print. And now that the Biblical element in preaching is receiving increased attention, I am confident that a fresh volume of sermons from you would fall in with that reform in the pulpit, and be well received.

I tell my pupils "Do this, do that, with your texts, preach thus and talk so, in your discourses;" and over and over again they ask me, "Who does it? Can you point us to the preacher who preaches so?" I often direct them to your two volumes of Sermons, and wish they were twenty. Will you not look over your silent drawers of manuscript, and

see if there is not something there which the Church of Christ wants? Hoping that the years are dealing more lightly with you than they are with me,

I remain as ever,

Yours Fraternally,

AUSTIN PHELPS.

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AT EVENTIDE.

I.

THE OFFERS OF THE GOSPEL.

“Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money: come ye, buy and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money, and without price.”—ISA. 55: 1.

WE have here a man who wishes to dispose of something which he calls on people to buy. He is a minister of religion. He is like all true ministers of religion every where. They offer the same things, urge the same motives, and announce the same conditions of sale with Isaiah, who from ancient time has been called the evangelical prophet, because he dwelt so much on Christ and his times.

Whenever such a minister enters the pulpit, if his heart is right, this is his purpose, to offer the same things once more to men. We are here

professedly for this purpose, to offer you something. We shall speak, God helping us, hoping and expecting to succeed in persuading you to receive at our hands that which we come to offer.

Let me preface what I have to say concerning our object in appearing here from time to time, that every thing which you buy of us is warranted to be genuine and perfect. It has a government stamp upon it. The purchaser is perfectly assured against counterfeits. On every thing sold you will find engraved, for example, "This is the true bread which cometh down from heaven." "That is the true light." "Not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." Moreover it has a divine seal, the seal of the Holy Spirit, called, "The earnest of the inheritance," signifying, as this subjoined phrase expresses it, "the pledge of the purchased possession," or warrant of something laid up for us in heaven.

We call your attention especially to this seal on every thing which we offer, and which is conveyed to every one who buys of us; namely, he has in the gift of the Holy Spirit the pledge of something laid up for him in heaven; that is, certain feelings, joys, hopes, are imparted to him under the influences of the Holy Spirit which are an advance payment of the heavenly inheritance. Under those influences one may say, "I

know and am persuaded of the Lord Jesus that, feeling thus, I have a witness in my heart that I am born of God." This is the fruit of the Holy Spirit ; his seal. So that accepting these offers, every thing which you buy of us is not only warranted ; it is guaranteed ; that is, not only is it perfect ; it is sure.

In the name and by the authority of the Most High God we give, release, assign, and covenant with you to maintain, protect, defend, and guarantee your title against all adverse claims forever. This we do in the name and by the authority of God. This is assured to us and to you in these words of the Saviour : " And no man shall pluck them out of my hands." " Their inheritance shall be forever." " Your joy no man taketh from you." " And my people shall long enjoy the work of their hands." " He that toucheth you, toucheth the apple of his eye." " The Almighty shall be thy defence."

The security, you perceive, is perfect ; " As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so is the Lord round about his people from this time forth even forever." Indeed it is more permanent than the earth. " For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed, but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee."

Some people who have bought the same things which we now offer you, have already held them for five thousand and six thousand years. Abraham invested largely in them; his possession has increased, literally, as God promised him it should, as the stars of heaven, and as the sands of the sea shore. And he is the divinely appointed representative of all who have faith in these things; "for he is the father of all them that believe."

The terms and conditions of sale in all cases are, payment on delivery. Any thing of a promissory kind is not received.

You will wish to know how payments are to be made. I answer, "Without money and without price."

This, singular as we must all acknowledge it to be, is greatly objected to as exorbitant; it is most unpopular; it hinders our success. But God has so ordained it.

We have been offered all kinds of payment as substitutes for this. Our purchasers are at first extremely loth to buy "without money and without price." We could have sold every thing had we been willing to take payment in different kinds of commodities.

Some have offered morality, pure and good, as they called it; though we have an assayer who "sits as a refiner of silver," and he says it is

dross, as to any commercial value, if it be without the addition of that which he counsels all to buy of him.

We have been offered tears of repentance, historical faith, respect for religion, prayers twice a day, church going twice or three times a Sabbath, and much during the week, almsgiving, visiting the sick, conviction of sin, fear of death and hell, abstinence from swearing and lying and all vice ; in short, every thing on earth, including bodily torture and martyrdom ; but not one of our treasures was ever sold in a single instance for one of these things. If any one pretends to have sold them for such things, Christ says of him, "the same is a thief and a robber." Our pearl of great price can be had only at great cost; viz: "without money and without price." There are no other things on earth sold at such a rate as these. You all know what this means. If one present says he does not know and wishes me to explain it, I must decline, for it would be a reflection of your understanding to explain it. You have all attended these sales for years, and you understand that this is that which we always get for our payment. And many of you know that these terms are the reason that you have not made the purchase. Every one else who has any thing to sell looks for people who have money.

But our purchasers are in every case those who "have no money." If you have money you will not buy of us to-day. "Every one that thirsteth" for these things, and "he that hath no money," are purchasers ;" all others are merely idle, curious spectators. We are aware that ours are extremely costly, difficult terms, hard to meet. But we hope to persuade you that you will be gainers by the trade.

The first thing, then, which we have to offer is,
ETERNAL LIFE.

Are there any here who wish for Eternal Life?

I hear some one ask if Eternal Life means living forever? No. That might be the greatest curse. It will be the greatest curse to many. Some who have been deceived in this thing are now weeping and wailing. They now seek to be rid of that which was once falsely represented to them as eternal life. Could they but get rid of it, annihilation would be gladly received in exchange. When it is evening they say, would God it were morning; and when it is morning they say, would God it were evening.

The eternal life which we offer you is in the soul. Life is not merely time; it is a principle in our nature; and when that nature is in healthy exercise you know that every thing goes

well. Eternal life is order, law, happiness, righteousness, prosperity, bliss ; and that forever and ever. Have you ever considered what forever is ? The longest journey on earth has an end. You get upon the summit at last and say, "Now we are at the top ; soon we shall begin to descend." But there is no summit to "forever." No Chimborazo, or Himalaya towering above every thing else. Onward and upward forever is eternal life. It is the best thing which God ever made. God's greatest gift is thus expressed : "And I give unto them eternal life." It is even coupled with the name of God : "This is the true God and eternal life."

But any man can sell you any thing, and faster, than we can succeed in selling you this greatest of blessings.

II. I WILL OFFER YOU A THRONE.

But what authority have I to sell thrones ?

Here is my warrant : "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches : " "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame and am set down with my Father in his throne."

One inquires, But how may you know that such things are to be obtained if we buy them ?

Here is the assurance from the evangelist John who enjoyed a sight of heaven: "And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them."

He who offers these thrones, makes them. Indeed He, only, makes thrones: "For by him were all things created, that are in heaven and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers."

He disposes of twelve of them at once: "Ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of Man shall come in his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel."

What does the throne which we are promising, govern?

Some who have now obtained these thrones have told us in the inspired language of prophecy, what for substance is meant by the promise, "And hath made us unto our God kings and priests; and we shall reign on the earth."

It might be injurious for us at present to know what this literally means. It is sufficient to know that our future elevation can be expressed only by saying that we shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years. Am I trifling, using words with-

out knowledge? I use the words of God. I will vary my offers.

III. I WILL OFFER YOU A CROWN.

There is something more obviously possessive in a crown than in a throne. I offer you a crown; and here you will at once agree that I am safe. "Be thou faithful unto death and I will give thee a crown of life."

Paul had obtained one of these crowns; "which," he says, "the Lord, the righteous Judge shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing."

Paul was glad not to be peculiar in his crown. People of good sense do not love to be peculiar in that which they wear. Paul beautifully shows his modesty, his humility, in this.

There is one thing to be said about the crown which you may obtain: It is capable, while we are in this world, of being greatly enhanced in value and beauty. Bring your jewels, and the Maker will set them for you. Paul's crown will be remarkable for this, the jewels which he obtained to be set in it.

There are crowns for all, — for all them that love his appearing.

"Think of the crowns which the ransomed shall wear,"
and obtain each of you one of them. Again:

IV. WILL YOU HAVE A HARP ?

Those who love music and frequent the music halls surely will be attracted by this.

The great company of heaven are represented as "having every one of them harps." Will you spend your existence in praise ? We are always happy when we are praising, if our hearts are in it.

We read of the harps of God. Will you have one ? Will you praise forever ? "No more sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more death." Will you join the song of redemption for eternity ? "No man can learn that song but they which are redeemed from among men." There is a harp for you ; but I pray you remember this : It will not be hung up draped, if you do not take it. Some one else will take it. You might chance to hear it as you pass by and forever pass away, and think, how wonderful ! surpassing the instruments of earth. You would be told, that harp was destined once for you.

Secure it while it is called to-day !

V. Again, strange to say I can put you in possession of some thing more. You will hesitate to credit me when I tell you

I HEREBY OFFER YOU EVERY THING.

For only listen to these words of God : "He

that overcometh shall inherit all things, and I will be his God, and he shall be my son."

There is one word used in the Bible to express the idea of "all things," which are promised to every one who will accept them. That word is, *Salvation*.

On this gift of salvation are inscribed such words as these: "He shall not be hurt of the second death." "They shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand." "And I will raise him up at the last day." "Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."

One peculiarity of it is, the author of it attends personally and bestows it. Hence He is called by the name of *Salvation*: "The God of salvation." Salvation is ascribed to him as peculiarly his work: "Salvation is of the Lord." He is personally present whenever there is need of it, under all circumstances: "Call upon me in the day of trouble. I will deliver thee and thou shalt glorify me."

Thus we ministers of the Gospel professedly spend our lives, you providing for our temporal sustenance, and we repeating the invitation: "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy and eat, yea come, buy wine and milk with-

out money and without price." I say, this is professedly our employment. Sometimes, perhaps, yielding to temptation, we may feel that this is too monotonous, tame, not sufficiently intellectual; so we are led "to please men" and to come to you with excellency of speech and of man's wisdom, seeking to gain popular applause, yielding to the plea that men must be pleased in order to be won. It is interesting to notice that the apostle who disclaimed human eloquence and the art of rhetoric, was without any attempt in those directions, the most finished model of human persuasion among all writers, his epistles being masterpieces of art; while you nowhere discover in them any striving after scholastic skill. He carries out in his writings that which he says was his aim in preaching at Corinth, "the eye of Greece," as it was called; the resort of the skilled professors of every branch of scholarly attainment. Horace says, "It does not fall to every man to go to Corinth." "I am determined," Paul says, "not to know any thing among you save Jesus Christ and him crucified." So we preach, God helping us, whether men will hear or whether they will forbear. We have nothing to do but offer you the things which I have enumerated. We might make lyceums of our places of worship, entertain you with science, literature, political disquisitions; but we

have no commission so to do ; we are not instructed to lecture you on subjects of such temporal, fleeting interest as the news, and politics, or questions of the exchange and the street. Yet in our humble vocation we are not forbidden to be as eloquent as Isaiah, as consummate masters of rhetoric as Paul, as wise as Ecclesiastes, as philosophical as the Evangelist John. But all the time we must make you feel that we are offering you eternal life, a throne in heaven, a crown in heaven, and every thing else which God has to bestow, under the title of salvation.

This we shall continue to do, though oftentimes we are compelled to cry, "who hath believed our report, and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?" We must often point out the consequences of neglecting this great salvation, show you the desperate wickedness of your hearts, the fatal consequences of your unbelief, and not spare to repeat the inspired representation of eternal damnation, with tribulation and wrath, indignation and anguish, on every soul that doeth evil. We must all the time be warning you that the time is short ; that the shadows are lengthening ; that you know not what a day may bring forth.

For, some of you, moved by our urgency in pressing upon you these offers, say to us in your hearts, "Perhaps I will take your offers to-mor-

row." Dear friend, perhaps you may not be in a situation to buy of us to-morrow. So long as you have not accepted our offers of a Saviour, you are living under condemnation; there may be put a step between you and death, of which we have illustrations every week. It is most wonderful that while God might do nothing in addressing us but warn, and threaten, he pleads, he solicits; and the great apostle to the Gentiles uses this language: "As though God did beseech you by us, we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God." While doing this, the effect of which oftentimes is to lull, and soothe, he is speaking to those who have long since forfeited all claim on divine forbearance; so that should the Most High whet his glittering sword and cut us off, should he, as the Great Husbandman, say of us, "Cut it down, why cumbereth it the ground," there is no reason why the intercessor should plead: "Lord, let it alone this year also;" for he did so last year, and the year before that, and five years ago, nay ten, and with some of you twenty, thirty, and with one and another even more. How can you, then, promise that you will to-morrow, perhaps, accept our offers, when you may not hear these offers again! You may be imprisoned to-morrow for eternity. This call you may have occasion to reflect upon with

never ceasing regret, saying, "How have I hated instruction and despised reproof."

Some of you do not feel any need of these things. What can we do? We cannot create your taste. All that we can say further of the things offered is, Here they are, full and free; all things are ready. Ho, every one that thirsteth, come; and he that hath no money, come.

Some of you, I repeat it, dislike our terms: "Without money and without price." You say, These are a poor man's terms, a beggar's terms. You say, again, Those who are invited to buy are those who are without money.

Never was there a poor man, not even a beggar, so utterly poor and beggared as you and I are in consequence of sin. "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all," But "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth." Believing in his sufferings and death for you, will be the same as if you had kept the law of God as the angels have. The reason why heaven and salvation are "without money and without price" is, "Christ died for us." We once had a price to pay; fallen angels are paying it now for themselves, and will be paying it forever; which will be true of us if we do not accept the offer made by the Gospel:

“He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life;” the consequence of neglecting to do so being thus expressed: “And he that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him.”

“And was the ransom paid? It was, and paid
(What can exalt its bounty more?) for thee.”

Therefore it is without money and without price to us, because Christ, the God-man, tasted death for every man. Hear the Gospel in these few words: “Believe and thou shalt be saved.”

But if you think these terms are such as any one can easily meet, let me assure you they will seemingly cost you all which you have and are. One man went and sold all that he had and invested it in a pearl of great price which he happened to meet with; and Christ compares all who buy these things which we offer you, to such a man. A young man who came to buy and had great possessions was told by the Saviour, “Go thy way, sell all that thou hast and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven, and come and follow me.” The terms, he also felt, were very hard; only heaven forever for his gold! He went away sorrowful. What would he give to have the same offer made to him to-day! He might have been an apostle. He might have written one of the Gospels. He

might have been surveying myriads brought home to God by his words. Where now are his great possessions? Where are they? Ask, where are the snows of that winter? And where is he? He is somewhere to-day; and we shall be "somewhere" when we die.

I am not sure that I shall succeed in disposing of one of these things to you. Must I return and say, "Here, Lord, are thy thrones, and crowns, and harps, eternal life and salvation." Another lost opportunity! "Who has believed our report?"

And why do I not succeed? The principal reason is, the terms are, "Without money and without price!"

Again; I am tempted to make you one more offer:

VI. TAKE ONE OF THESE THINGS AND YOU SHALL HAVE THE WHOLE.

For instance, if you will have a harp you shall have a crown and throne. If you will love God and say as David did, "My mouth shall speak the praise of the Lord, and let all flesh bless his holy name forever and ever," you shall have salvation and all things; but on the same inexorable terms, viz: "Without money and without price." We cannot abate one iota from these terms.

These thrones will one day all be set, these crowns be all put on, these harps be in hand, salvation will be complete, eternal life will be extending its reign over the full number of the redeemed. Listening, we perhaps shall hear your voice, you standing without and saying, "Lord, Lord, open to us." Ah, there is a great multitude then without, wishing to buy. As we listen we hear them crying out in words like these: "How have we hated instruction and despised reproof! The harvest is passed, the summer is ended, and we are not saved." Then the voices fall to expostulation: "Will the Lord cast off forever? and will he be favorable no more? Is his mercy clean gone forever? Doth his promise fail forevermore? Hath God forgotten to be gracious? Hath he in his anger shut up his tender mercies?" The song within proceeds; the harpers harp upon their harps; the multitude which no man can number, bow like a field of ripe grain with the wind passing over it; crowns unnumbered are cast at the feet of Immanuel; every throne is filled; but where are you, who cares for you, who even thinks of you? The Registries of Deeds are burned up, gold and silver are melted, houses and lands, the earth and all that is therein are in ashes; voices are heard lamenting; O, that they were wise, that they understood

this, that they had considered their latter end!

I have reserved one piece of information for this moment. It is this:

VII. IF YOU FEEL INCOMPETENT TO BUY THESE THINGS, THE PROPRIETOR OF THEM, IF YOU SINCERELY DESIRE IT, WILL FURNISH YOU WITH THE DISPOSITION.

He is able and willing. Only signify to him your sinful inability, your indisposition, to receive eternal life, the crowns, the thrones, the harps of heaven without money and without price, and sincerely beg of him to give you a heart to make the purchase on his terms, and he will do it.

Now what can I say more? He who sent me speaks; let man be silent: "Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread, and your labor for that which satisfieth not? hearken diligently unto me and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness. Incline your ear and come unto me, hear and your soul shall live, and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David."

II.

HAVE WE PERMISSION TO LOVE GOD?

“I will love thee, O Lord, my strength.”—Ps. 18: 1.

IT will awaken surprise in you to hear this question, yet it cannot exceed mine on hearing it as I once did, from a distinguished man whom I had long regarded as truly devout. He was a member of one of the evangelical denominations, a regular attendant on religious ordinances, a communicant, a firm believer in the fundamental truths of religion. Being together at the house of his relative, this man, of world-wide reputation as a man of genius, astonished me with this question when we were by ourselves: “What do you understand by love to God?” I looked at him with surprise; but before I could speak, he added, “I know what fear of God means; but I do not understand what is meant when I am called upon to love God.”

Had I uttered the thought which arose in my

mind, I should have said: "I always supposed you to be a Christian; can it be possible that you have need that one teach you the alphabet of religious experience?" I chose to put questions to him which would make plain the secret of his difficulty; his frank nature encouraged me to ask them. His difficulty, I soon found, was this, that loving God implied a degree of familiarity which seemed to him unsuitable in a finite creature when approaching his Creator. He acknowledged that the language of the Bible encouraged the idea of familiarity in our intercourse with God; still he preferred to explain all such permission by what he called Orientalism. In vain was it urged in reply that Orientalism rather forbade than encouraged liberty in approaching Majesty; prostration, even to abjectness, was enjoined on ministers of state, as well as menial servants. Still, he expressed a fear of presumption in drawing near to God; he would stand afar off with the publican, and not lift up so much as his eyes to heaven, rather than seem to trespass beyond the limit of reverence.

It was impossible not to love the spirit of humility which seemed to actuate this man. Some I knew would doubt his piety, if they should hear him ask what it is to love God; therefore I have never disclosed the conversation, being especially careful not to make allusion to it since

his decease; no one therefore knows to whom I refer. It was my firm belief that he was a child of God, though his inquiry about love to God might stir a question to the contrary in some zealous, honest mind among his friends.

His question has had two effects on me; one, to make me endeavor to be charitable in judging others; the other, to make clear to me the answer to the question which I propose now to consider: Have we permission to love God?

It would not surprise me to know that there are serious persons in all our congregations who are reluctant to profess that they love God, for the same reason that the individual to whom I have referred was afraid to recognize in his religious experience so familiar an emotion as love. He could not withhold an assurance that he did fear God; that this fear was not selfish, but reverence and godly fear. But it may be that he had heard some persons give utterance to emotions which they called love, but which seemed to him to betray a want of reverence for the Most High. So there are estimable persons in every religious community who are repelled by the freedom with which they hear others express their affection for their Maker, when it seemed devoutly to be wished that his dread would fall on them and his excellency make them afraid! Hence there are two extremes against which we

need to be on our guard. One is Familiarity; the other is Stoicism. The apostles maintain a just medium between these extremes. We nowhere find affectionateness in their intercourse with Christ approach an undue freedom; nor are we chilled by their reserve. The apostle John might have pleaded an excuse for any appearance of undue warmth of emotion, Peter with his wonderful experience of forgiveness would not have been blamed if his affection for his Lord had showed itself in enthusiasm at every mention of his name. But even Peter is a model of soberness in his affection; we feel that his love is at full tide in his Epistles, but we are nowhere offended by the want of self-control.

The question which I have already mentioned as put to me by a man of distinguished genius, was also expressed by a plain man, a mechanic, a member of an evangelical church. He was in the last stages of a decline, but in full possession of his faculties. Once as I was leaving his bedside, he said: "One thing more I wish to ask: I lie here and talk with God in a way which startles me. I use expressions of endearment, address him by affectionate names, make requests as a child to a parent, indulge in words of adoration; all of which, on second thought, seem to me too free for a mortal to use in his intercourse with his Master. Yet my feelings are so strong

that I cannot restrain myself. Tell me, should I love God in this manner? or should I repress my feelings and check my words?"

I said to him: "You ask, *May* you love God thus? The Saviour says, quoting the Old Testament, 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind.' Do you ever exceed this?" An expression of satisfaction came over his face. The next day he had gone to see Him "whom not having seen" he "loved."

I was personally acquainted with the following incident in the experience of a lad, which I will mention for the instruction of the young, some of whom have questionings whether their religious feelings are not to be suppressed as the weaknesses of childhood.

A lad was on his way from school with others in playful conversation. When he entered his house he laid down his books in the entry, went to his chamber, locked the door, and heedless whether any one was in the room adjoining, said, in a childlike language, "O God; my Heavenly Father! I have come to pray to thee. I do not want any thing in particular, but I love thee. I have come to say this. I don't know what has made me feel as I have felt this forenoon, but I have not been able to think of much besides

God. I never loved any thing so. ‘Whom have I in heaven but thee; and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee.’ Yes, there is one thing which I do desire, and that is, that all the scholars may feel so toward thee. There is, —” then he named five or six. After a few words more he joined his brothers and sisters in their amusements, not feeling, probably, that he had expressed any thing of special interest; yet it may be questioned whether in heaven that day there had been alleluias which had awakened divine approbation more than this child’s prayer.

Were we required to give a definition of love to God, we might well be at a loss for one which would seem more fitted to the subject than the feeling of this dying Christian and of this child. For it is questionable whether any thing could be found which better expresses love to God as we learn it from the experience of good men in the Bible. One expression is most common among them: “My God,” — used as a term of endearment: “O God, thou art my God; early will I seek thee. My soul longeth for thee, my flesh thirsteth for thee, in a dry and thirsty land where no water is.” If there is one thing for which David is remarkable it is, Love to God; and he is called “a man after God’s own heart.” The words of the text leave no room to question

what was the predominant feeling of the sweet Psalmist of Israel: "I will love thee, O Lord, my strength." Then he proceeds to heap up epithets of love to God: "The Lord is my rock and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God and my strength whom I will trust; my buckler and the horn of my salvation and my high tower." He draws his epithets, you perceive, from his experience in wildernesses and caves. Suppose that he had been not a military, but a sea-faring man, he would have drawn his epithets from a sailor's experience. Among the objects of exceeding joy to the sailor are the light house, the pilot, the harbor; no words are more thrilling than "homeward bound," "safe home." We should hear David, if a navigator, say, "Thou art my light house, my pilot, my harbor; to thee I am homeward bound; with thee I am safe home." It may be confidently said that not even is romance more enthusiastic in passionate expressions than the poetry which is framed by those who love God and Jesus Christ. Such hymns as that by Dr. Watts beginning, "My God, my portion, and my love," and that by Mrs. Steele, "My God, my Father, blissful name," and hymns of all the ages of Christendom to Jesus Christ, reveal this truth, that such love is the principal emotion of the Christian heart. There is one branch of evidence here which can be ap-

preciated only by the regenerate ; I refer to the experience of people at conversion. When the love of God is shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost which is given to us, when the change takes place in our nature which is denoted by being "born again," "created anew in Christ Jesus," "heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ," when by as sudden a disclosure of spiritual things as Paul received on his way to Damascus, the mind first has a conception of God, is convinced of its sinfulness, its lost estate, when Christ is revealed to the mind as the Divine Saviour with as full a revelation as to Saul of Tarsus, making him cry, "Who art thou, Lord," then is kindled a flame of love to God and Christ which the apostle Paul declares to be comparable only to the creation of light : "For God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." Then is fulfilled that passage in the Psalms : "He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings. And he hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God. Many shall see it, and fear, and shall trust in the Lord." Is. 40 : 2, 3.

One instance will suffice to show what this experience is. It takes place everywhere under

the preaching of the Gospel, sometimes in scores of cases at once. A man was riding home on horseback after evening service, meditating on what he had heard. He was secretly persuaded to yield himself up to God; when all at once light from heaven broke upon his mind, revealing to him the way of salvation by Christ with a sense of peace with God and the joy of pardoned sin; so that he found himself in a new world. Unable to contain his joy at the discovery, having no one at home who could enter into his feelings, turning his horses head, he rode back three miles to the minister's house, and called him to the door. Taking both of the minister's hands in his, he cried out: "O, sir! what a God we have!" which was the substance of all that he said, for it was impossible for words to express his emotions, and he mounted and rode home, singing and praying. No one would have found it more impossible than he to answer the question, "What do you understand by loving God;" he, whose whole being was at that hour flooded with it, could have found no words to define his emotions. Does any one say, "Of what value can such emotions be to God?" We might answer him, Of what value is any thing to God? He will one day give up this globe to fire. There is nothing of any value to God except love. The whole object of God

in the Bible seems every where to have been to make men love him. You would not have supposed that those lightnings and thunder and voices on Sinai which made Moses exceedingly fear and quake, meant, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart." But they did. As we read the Old Testament we find that God is continually directing his efforts with men to make them love him. His terrific judgments are owing wholly to the refusal of man to love God. Will loving God satisfy Him? Let us inquire into the teaching of his word upon this point.

I. THE EXPERIENCE OF MEN IN THE BIBLE SHOWS US THAT THE SUM OF HUMAN DUTY IS TO LOVE GOD.

No book is more satisfactory on this point than Deuteronomy. Of the Saviour's three replies to Satan's temptations in the wilderness, two are from that book; the third is also found there, though it occurs elsewhere. In that book we find Moses rehearsing to Israel their sins and the consequences of them in the judgments of God, how well it would have been with them had they but loved Him; then what expostulations he uses to make them love God!

There was also that great captain, Joshua, who led Israel in the conquest of Canaan, taking

cities walled up to heaven, slaying mighty kings; then in his farewell address to the nation using language which would sound strangely, we would all acknowledge, from the lips of the Queen of Great Britain to Parliament, or from any President of these United States. Imagine those dignitaries saying in their addresses, "Take good heed to yourselves that ye love the Lord your God."

It deserves remark that he does not call upon them as he well might have done, in view of their stupendous history from Egypt through the Red Sea and the wilderness, to fear and tremble; but, "take good heed to yourselves that ye love the Lord your God." Perhaps some will say, It was a strange method of making men love God, to threaten them; to make men entreat that the voice might not be spoken to them any more. Let him consider that there is no way in which, on account of the hardness of our hearts God brings us to love him more effectually than by his terrible dispensations.

We have seen those who had withstood the gentle methods by which God sought to bring them to himself; they have broken the cords of love, the bands of a man, which would have bound their affections to God; till at last some great affliction has won their alienated affections; fire has consumed their property; failures have

set them at the foot of the hill which all their life time they had been climbing; death has despoiled them of a companion or child, so that the pillars of heaven tremble and are astonished at his reproof. Instead of growing sullen, then despondent, they have humbled themselves under the mighty hand of God, and he has exalted them in due time.

Years after we have seen them walking the heavenward path, testifying, "It is good for me that I have been afflicted." "Before I was afflicted I went astray; but now have I kept thy word." In heaven they will probably adore the wisdom and goodness which devised the chastisement that brought them to their senses. "Why is it," we have heard them say, "that God should in mercy have afflicted me, thereby bringing me to himself, while so many are left to have their portion in this life, and perhaps perish?"

These people can understand us when we say that Mount Sinai was intended to make men love God; the law was our school-master, to bring us to Christ. There are doubtless some who read these lines who look upon the trials which have crushed them as the chief blessings which God has bestowed. These trials will make the basis of their songs of thanksgiving in heaven.

When night comes down in the Azores, the

lavender beds yield perfumes, which all day long the hot sun had consumed. After a storm we look for sea-mosses and pebbles which the working of the sea has brought on shore. Solomon says in his prayer at the dedication of the temple, "The Lord hath said that he would dwell in the thick darkness." If God desires to draw a Christian very near to himself, he will almost always send a heavy trial upon him. David said, "When He hath tried me I shall come forth as gold."

Satan thought that he would destroy the man of Uz; so he moved God to put forth his hand and touch his flesh; but it had the contrary effect; God said to the friends of Job: "Ye have not spoken of me the thing that is right as my servant Job hath." We see Christians who have been grievously afflicted, cleaving to God the more that he smites them. God seems to shake them off, as the angel did wrestling Jacob; but they will not be shaken off: "I will not let thee go except thou bless me."

They testify that they never loved God so much as when he had taken their treasures from them. He sometimes chooses sharper arrows from his quiver, that we may turn to him that smiteth us. If He does this, in exchange for all which they have on earth, Christians sometimes come to the conclusion that God is the best Por-

tion ; that his loving kindness is better than life ; that heavenly mindedness is well purchased by the loss of all things ; that to love God as Habakkuk did, is better than to have the fig tree blossom. Why is it better ? Because God says, " I love them that love me ; " and what if God loves a man ? We would give up all that we have, including those nearest to us, when God bestows himself upon us.

God in his infinite wisdom finds his " declarative " glory in the happiness of his intelligent creatures. He resolves to make them love him, knowing that thereby they will be happy, and their happiness will glorify him. Hence he seeks to make us love him. He sometimes uses the loudest voices in creation to proclaim, " Thou shalt love the Lord thy God." He lightens, he thunders, he uses that voice which made Israel tremble, or the still, small voice which made Elijah who stood firm under the fire and earthquake and the wind, wrap his face in his mantle and stand in the door of the cave. If God has set his love on a man he may honor him by great trials. He cannot trust all to bear great trials. They are not *asbestos* ; but combustible. But he said of Saul of Tarsus, " I will show him how great things he must suffer for my sake."

Probably there is nothing which excites the admiration of angels more, than to see us loving

God the more that he afflicts us. Then they see the power of faith ; how it makes a man endure as seeing him who is invisible. Angels see God face to face ; perhaps they never have any thing in their personal experience to try their confidence in God. But to see us in this sinful world loving an unseen God and Saviour, cleaving to him the more that he chastens us, seems to them, no doubt, a stupendous thing.

Perhaps God afflicts some Christians to make of them a spectacle to angels and men. While men are pitying them, saying, " You have more than your share of trouble," it is because they can endure. God will let them see hereafter that the trial of their faith was much more precious than of gold which perisheth though it be tried with fire and was found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ.

II. THE CROSS OF CHRIST IS THE DIVINE TESTIMONY TO MAN, NOT ONLY THAT HE MAY, BUT THAT HE MUST LOVE GOD.

There seems to be an argument on this point, addressed to man as an intellectual being, in the three epistles of John. That man had written " the fourth Gospel," as free thinkers call it, some of whom would sacrifice much could they undermine the confidence of men in its apostolic

authority. He had seen visions beyond the experience of all the prophets. Now he comes to write some farewell lines to the people of God in all ages. What mighty work shall that be which is to crown his earthly labors? Some Epistle to the Romans, perhaps; or, it is the Epistle to the Hebrews, whose opening chapter always seems like the tread of battalions. Instead of this, there is nothing in all the New Testament of more artless simplicity than those three epistles of John. It is given to him in those epistles to dwell upon this: God is love; to enjoin upon Christians, not that they remember one and another of the important texts of the Christian faith, but that we have known and believed the love which God has toward us.

God is not wisdom, nor power, nor holiness, nor justice; though each of these attributes in him is infinite; but the governing principle, motive, end, in his character is love. Strange would it be if love to God were not insisted on as the governing principle in his intelligent creatures, in man made after his own image and likeness, especially in the second birth conferred upon him by the Holy Ghost, the third person in the Godhead, the author of the new creation. The Holy Ghost is the author of the human nature of Christ. Shall he be the author of Incarnate Love, yet fail to make man, renewed, for whom

Divine love is made incarnate, partaker of love to God ? Shall man, his new creation, be a cold, phlegmatic, intellectual being ?

See man's Redeemer an infant, then a man of sorrows, acquainted with grief, with no certain place where he could lay his head, despised and rejected of men, enduring every form of contumely, bound, buffeted, crowned with thorns ; consider him who endured such contradiction of sinners against himself ; say, " He loved me and gave himself for me ; " recount each sorrow which he carried for us ; then ask, From what region of the earth did a man proceed who propounded to us the question, Have we permission to love God ? We would in reply counsel him to consider that marvellous sentence in the writings of the Apostle Paul who breaks forth with this strange utterance while sending messages of affection to the Corinthians : " If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ let him be anathema, maranatha." Let him explain why the absence of love to Christ should deserve denunciation ; and why may not the absence of love to God be equally criminal ?

May we be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth and length and depth and height ; and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, that we may be filled with all the fulness of God.

Nothing will probably occupy the thoughts of some through eternity with more profound astonishment than that they ever had to be asked twice to love God, except it be that God condescended to ask them twice to love him. Did the Almighty ever receive a refusal or neglect from me, and ask me a second time to love him? Has he asked twice for my heart and asked in vain? If the Final Judge pronounces upon one of us the sentence, "Depart from me," it will be the occasion of everlasting astonishment to that soul that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost could severally and together say to him, "How often would I have gathered you — and ye would not." Let this appeal now prevail. If not, God grant that it may not prove to be the last.

III.

PAUL'S ESTIMATE OF HIMSELF BEFORE AND AFTER CONVERSION.

“If any man thinketh that he hath whereof he might glory in the flesh, I more.”

“But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ.”—Phil. 3 : 4, 7.

IN these words we have the apostle's different opinion of himself before and after conversion.

We could not succeed in finding a better specimen of an apparently religious man before conversion, than Saul. He had deep reverence for God. He observed all the requirements of the faith in which he was brought up. We probably err if we think that his conduct toward Christians was from a blood-thirsty disposition. It was zeal for his religion that made him a persecutor. It grieved him to think that the Christians should seek to overturn such a religion as Moses had received from God. No miracles claimed to be wrought by Christ, he thought

could go beyond the miracles of the Old Testament. That religion was built on miracles, beginning with Israel in Egypt, the burning bush, the Red Sea, Sinai, Horeb, the conquest of Canaan, Mount Hor and Nebo.

The idea that a man who had been crucified between two thieves, while his timid followers fled, should be deified, after being stolen away from his sepulchre, all power in heaven and on earth be claimed for him; that such men as Joseph of Arimathea, Nicodemus a ruler, and Stephen, should be duped by him, only exasperated him; he felt that strong measures were needed to crush the growing delusion. Not from mere love of giving pain, but from zeal for God, he became a persecutor.

When it became necessary to put such a man as Stephen to death, he was glad, no doubt, that natural courage did not fail; he consented to it, and kept the raiment of them that slew him. In all this, he was still an accomplished scholar, a prominent member of Jewish society, but an unbeliever, which in view of demonstrative evidence was inexcusable. Yet if any one had accused him of cruelty from the love of giving pain, no doubt he would have resented it, and would have defended himself by setting forth the enormous imposture which he would say he was piously seeking to expose.

No one can read the religious papers of our times in days of high religious excitement, without seeing how far even cultivated men can go in opposing others who differ from them. Let some one who has become prominent in the community as a champion of their sect become a convert to an opposite faith, and you will see in the studied sarcasms of some, perhaps their vituperation, open pity, the abandonment of him to what they consider deserved neglect, not to say contempt, for daring to impugn their faith. If these things are done in our day by those who claim to be Christians, we cannot wonder that the growing success of the Nazarene's supposed imposture, should have carried even such a man as Saul of Tarsus beyond the bounds of humanity.

All this time he was a liberal scholar, a polite, courteous, and in private, kind man. He could talk about Moses and the prophets, the Levitical law, the ceremonies of religion, the rules which ought to regulate one's behaviour in society, how much mint, anise, and cummin were a proper measure of one's piety, if he wished to be scrupulous in keeping the law. It was a great satisfaction to him that all the externals of his religious history were so unexceptionable.

There was no question that he had been circumcised the eighth day; his lineage was undoubted; the Scribes had verified it; in the

tribe of Benjamin he delighted to find his name written. Young people loved to be told that they were of the tribe of "little Benjamin;" they could not but feel even when grown up that there was fondness on the part of Providence for all of that tribe.

Young Saul had proved to the High Priest and all the estate of the elders that he was a true Israelite of that tribe. All the paths of distinction were open to him; but more than all, his pharisaic strictness in keeping the law, joined to his unquestionable Jewish descent, and his ardent piety evinced by his being willing to persecute for the defence of Moses and the prophets; his determination to uphold the religion of the fathers, cost him what it might on the score of personal feeling, made him willing to challenge comparison with any young religionist the world over.

Indeed, from what we know of Paul in his writings we are ready to believe that all which he says of himself in the text is far from boasting. For we may venture to say that the world fails to furnish us with a more lovely natural character than he evidently possessed. We may not suppose that he grew at once from a malignant fiend to such a perfect specimen of a man as his epistles show him to be. He must have had in him the germ of those remarkable quali-

ties which he manifested in his intercourse with the Christians of his day. We infer from his writings that he suffered greatly from the tempers of men ; that the behaviour of some professing to be Christians, was irksome to him in the extreme ; yet can we anywhere find such greatness as marks his words of reproof?

Instead of studying Lord Chesterfield for principles of politeness in our intercourse with one another, it may be safely said, that a careful observance of the treatment by Paul, of people who had given him occasion for offence, is the best guide to men and manners, to that true politeness which springs from benevolence. One cannot read, for example, the words of Paul to the Corinthian Christians, and remember their conduct at the Lord's table, and not wonder at the kindness which prevails in his reproofs. Paul must have had in his natural character a foundation for such things as he here and elsewhere exhibits ; much as he owed to sovereign grace we feel that he was a man greatly to be loved, and worthy to be studied ; he could not by imitation have acquired at once those traits of character which we find in his writings. Judging from the effects of conversion since his day, we are made to feel that he must have had many amiable traits either by nature or education.

At the risk of seeming to digress from my sub-

ject, I feel constrained to say that we greatly err if we let our children go at large in the world with evil companions, or furnish them with money to gratify every expensive, worldly taste, neglecting to restrain them, and to bring them up after a godly sort, then, laying the blame of their not being converted, on ministers. Should they be converted we must not wonder to see them chastened by the hand of covenant love. If we spare the rod, God has one which he will surely use with our children, if he loves them. He will take them in hand, and, in dealing severely with them, break our hearts also.

We see in Paul the beautiful effects of parental culture. It seems as though there had been verified to his parents the quaint saying, "Fill the waterpots with water and Christ will turn it into wine." Give the children right moral training, not neglecting it because it is not "the one thing needful," in the comparative sense of that term. Though the fruit may not be seen at once, it will be seen when regenerating grace is given in answer to prevailing prayer.

But to return. Here we have a man who by nature and education is a model man. The moralists, the religionists of that day would place any crown on his head which his ambition would have reached after. Indeed I shall gain the as-

sent of all when I say,—let young Saul of Tarsus, the unconverted Saul, now appear in some parts of our country, and it would be deemed illiberal, even bigoted, not to receive him into full communion in many of our religious circles. His differences of opinion on subjects of a religious nature would be treated as mere matters of speculation ; it would be said, “If such a man cannot be saved, who will be ? Show us a professed Christian who is such an example of the virtues, the graces of character, of all which adorns humanity.

“Listen to his lectures. The eloquence of Isaiah, the grace of Ecclesiastes, the tone of the old desert rhetoric of Moses and Elijah appear in his speech. Can he not be persuaded to modify his speculative belief about Christianity a little, that we may settle him over one of our churches ? What audiences he would draw ! What a revenue would flow into that parish !” Thus he would be the most admired of preachers, unless some accomplished Hindoo, for example, should arise, conceding things to Jesus Christ as a teacher ; and then the young Jew would prove to be superseded.

All this excellence of natural character by itself, however, is of no avail before God. Some would say, If Saul were such a man as you describe, what need had he of being regenerated ?

Paul shall answer. We will now see this young Jew in the fulness of his attainments as a model man, casting it all away as a ground of justification, and, to use his most expressing figure, counting it but dung. But tell us not that he has now become a fanatic, that he has gone from the extreme of pharisaism. Unless we are ready to believe that such a man became in one day a bigot, for nothing, yea, worse than nothing, for stripes, imprisonment, stoning, wearisome journeys, the loss of professional reputation, his standing as a scholar gone, death everywhere threatening him, we must candidly inquire, what is the explanation of so mysterious a change? His writings prove beyond suspicion that he is upright, and not only so, but severely logical in all this; for was the epistle to the Romans written by a fanatic? Does the book of Acts record any vagaries? It is an unvarnished tale of Saul's conversion by the appearance to him of Jesus Christ with a light at noon surpassing the brightness of the sun, with a superhuman voice, saying, "Why persecutest thou me?" We cannot withhold our belief from the declaration, that straightway he preached in the synagogues that Jesus is the Son of God.

We find the burden of his doctrine from that time till his death to be, that "this is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation, that Jesus

Christ came into the world to save sinners," "and that for this cause he obtained mercy, that Jesus Christ might show forth in him a pattern of all long-suffering to them who should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting." Four words contain the burden of his message: "Christ died for us." Going deeper into the explanation of the plan of salvation we find him dwelling constantly on this, that simply believing on Christ saves us; that believing on Christ is imputed to a sinner for righteousness; so that pardon is given for nothing except the taking of it in the ordinary way in which a guilty person accepts pardon.

Eternal life is a gift; this must be received freely, not be paid for by meritorious works on the part of the sinner. Then we learn from him that his previous good character, his excellence as a man was what he calls the righteousness which is of the law; not the righteousness which is of faith; that a man may strive to have the righteousness which is of the law, but it will perish; that he tried the plan of being good as the way to be saved, but suffered intensely in doing it; for this was his experience: "I find a law in my members warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the

body of this death?" All the time so moral, yet so wretched! Here is his answer to the question, "Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord."

You would, perhaps, expect merely to find this man confessing only that he had made a mistake; that now he had gained more light, and in consequence had changed his opinion concerning Jesus of Nazareth, that he still insisted on the moral virtues as the ground of salvation, taking Christ as an excellent teacher, admitting that the Sermon on the Mount was an improvement on the old law. You would, perhaps, look to see him come forth under the name of "the reformed Jew," retaining all his old opinions as to the way to be saved, admitting merely that Christ had given us more light than Moses.

Nothing could be further from the truth. We may be surprised to find how he calls his whole past experience by severe names: "What things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things." And what things does it appear that he includes in the expression, "gain to me?" The answer to this important question

is seen in ascertaining the things for which he exchanged them. Because these were the opposites of the things which were "gain to him." We find him prizing the following things as pre-eminent beyond any thing which he ever was, or possessed, or knew before : —

The first which he specified is, To know Christ, "That I may know him." That the last thing which once he could have desired, should now be the first object in this enumeration is wonderful. His writings tell us what he had found Christ to be ; instead of an imposter, "God manifest in the flesh, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory."

Worship paid to Christ now took the place of contempt ; love supplanted hatred ; gratitude was the new, strange emotion which ruled in his feelings toward Him. He began at once to study a theme which was to be his employment forever, — the God-man, instead of an imposter, God manifest in the flesh, instead of a pretender. To know him and the power of his resurrection ; which opened to the mind of Paul the future eternal state of souls, the truth of which even if known by him before, now shone in his mind with the brightness of a sun.

Never had he before such contemplations as this revelation of the resurrection seems to have

given : for he became at once enthusiastic in his delight : " If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead." The prospect of being raised from the dead by the Lord Jesus, with a body like unto his Saviour's glorious body captivated him ;" it so filled his thoughts that nothing else seemed to bear any comparison with it : " I shall rise from the dead with a body like Christ's;" that expectation became his ruling motive. He who before had such an aversion to the name of Christ that he entered into houses with authority from the rulers, dragging men and women to prison, compelling them by torture to blaspheme the name of Jesus, now making it his chief joy " to know him and the power of his resurrection," when he would have a body " like unto his glorious body," is a marvel which even fiction has nothing to surpass. The fruit of it was a desire to have a " fellowship with him in his sufferings," longing to be like Christ to such an extent that he was glad even to be beaten, to be scourged for his name's sake ; even to be made " conformable unto his death."

We have only to read passages from his pen such as the following, to see the secret of his enthusiasm about Christ : " Who loved me and gave himself for me." " Remember them that have the rule over you." " Whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation :

Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and forever." "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us."

This wonderful change was not by a gradual process of amendment; it was an instantaneous change. "Suddenly there shone upon him a light from heaven above the brightness of the sun." As one brought to life has his powers of body and mind put in action, though for a few days feebly, yet each hour gaining strength, so this marvel of regenerating grace became a new creature, "and straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues that he was the Son of God."

Let any one of us imagine a change of any kind to happen to him. Suppose yourself to be invested with a power to read strange languages. A friend lately gave me a book consisting of one of the creeds composed of twenty-four articles, printed in thirty-three tongues. A few of them I could read, the rest were unintelligible, though in the English characters, but the larger part of them, the Russian, the Chinese, the Assyrian, the Ethiopic, were in strange letters. Suppose that a power were given you at once to read such

a book from beginning to end, or that you had the ability to travel from star to star; or, suppose that any other bodily or mental faculty equally marvelous, became yours to-day at noon, and in a week you found yourself using these faculties as familiarly as though you had always possessed them.

Paul thus suddenly found himself worshipping, loving, and with all his mind and strength serving a man of Galilee, who he knew had been nailed to a cross between thieves, then was placed in a tomb, and stolen from it, he believed, by his friends, whom he himself was engaged but lately in tempting, while torturing them to blaspheme.

Standing chief among equals he had the pre-eminence, and kept the raiment of the men who stoned the first Christian martyr. In two or three weeks, or less, he was preaching in the synagogues that this same Jesus is the Son of God. Such is converting grace; in all men the same, notwithstanding the phenomenal circumstances may be wanting; yet substantially, the change is in every regenerated man the same. We perceive that one who had experienced it, must have had a different estimate of himself before and after it took place.

Two things appear to have been the secret of the power wrought by Christ in the mind of Paul.

I. CHRIST MADE HIM FEEL FOR THE FIRST TIME THAT HE WAS A SINNER.

That was a new idea to him. He a sinner? He had never sinned, he thought, beyond the common frailties of men. To atone for this, he had fasted, worn broad passages of Scripture on his dress, kept the Levitical law punctiliously, persecuted the Christians who offended against the religion of the Old Testament. Hear the man that once had no idea that he could be classed among sinners, afterward say, "Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners of whom I am chief."

We hear him who once had such an estimate of himself as this, "touching the righteousness which is of the law, blameless," afterward say, "in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing." How can we account for this? There is no such teacher of self knowledge as Christ. When he takes possession of the soul, he makes a light shine through it brighter than the sun.

"All the churches shall know that I am he that searcheth the hearts and trieth the reins of the children of men." Simeon said to his mother, "This Child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel, and that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed." The woman of Samaria understood this when she left her water pot

at the well and went into the city and said, "Come, see a man that told me all that ever I did; is not this the Christ?"

I quote the language of learned men from their biographies, that the disclosures made to them under conviction of sin has opened to them a knowledge of their nature more than they have learned from books. Said an eminent man who late in life became a Christian, "I once thought myself as good as any who lived, or had lived; but in one day, reading the New Testament, I suddenly became convinced that probably there never was a heart which was worse than mine." So Paul: "I was alive without the law once; but when the commandment came sin revived and I died." All who have passed through this experience declare, that the belief of the atoning death of Christ for sin, brings into the mind a marvelous experience. Everything seems to be revolutionized, and all this in consequence of perceiving "how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures. Finding himself under condemnation as a sinner with no means of recovery,

II, PAUL DISCOVERED THAT THROUGH FAITH IN CHRIST A RIGHTEOUSNESS IS PROVIDED FOR THE SINNER.

This is safer than the righteousness which Adam had, or the angels that sinned ; for Adam and fallen angels lost their original righteousness: Dr Watts says :

“He raised me from the deep of sin,
The gates of gaping hell,
And fixed my standing more secure
Than 'twas before I fell.”

For the righteousness which is imputed to one who believes in Christ cannot be lost ; it is “the righteousness which is of God by faith,” not of man, by his works. So that it is better than the state of the first parents of our race, better than that of the angels who stood on their original sinlessness. Therefore, Paul made this the theme of his principal epistle, the Epistle to the Romans. Salvation by faith in Christ is thenceforth his theme. Through life it was uppermost in his thoughts. I cannot illustrate it better than by the following case. I was called to see an intelligent young lady who was supposed to be near her end. Though I went as soon as requested, she exclaimed, “You have come too late !” adding, that she had sinned away the day of grace. I told her that I would disprove this by one passage of Scripture ; but as I was saying this, the mother, a Christian woman, interrupted me by asking that I would not sit so near the bed as to touch the bed

clothes, for the patient had a brain fever, and the least jar or touch seemed almost to distract her. The passage, I said, was this: "To him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted to him for righteousness." Helpless as she was, she turned herself over in the bed and said, "What! are such words in the Bible? Say them again." After repeating them, I said, "If one feels that he has nothing to offer to God, but simply puts his trust in Him who died for him, pleading His merits instead of his own, his faith is imputed to him for righteousness. A calm came over her troubled thoughts — she fell into a peaceful sleep. I said to her, on her recovery, as Paul said, "Eneas, Jesus Christ maketh thee whole."

We meet with many who are acknowledged to be eminently moral people, patterns of amiable tempers, generous, and as Paul said of himself, "blameless."

He tells us that, before his conversion, he was as good as they. "If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he may trust in the flesh, I more." He felt that he was so good that he was willing to have Stephen put to death: "and when the blood of the martyr Stephen was shed, I also was consenting unto his death, and kept the raiment of them that slew him." In one hour he met with a change which made him a

new man, because he became acquainted with Jesus Christ as the atoning Saviour.

We infer from his preaching that the impression which Christ made upon him was, that he came into the world to save sinners. This made him feel that he was a sinner; that his righteousness was worthless; he could not be saved by it; while he had whereof to glory, yet not in the sight of God. When he came to see his need of perfection in order to be justified, he saw that it was not attainable by him; that it was provided for sinners by God, an imputed righteousness constituted by the merits of the Saviour; a righteousness without works, perfection imputed to one deserving of hell, a constructive perfection through faith in him who imputes his merits to the sinner that believes in him, and reckons faith for righteousness. Such is the plan of salvation by Christ, that it is declared to be "the power of God and the wisdom of God."

The disclosure to him of this way of justification made him feel as nothing else ever did that he might be a sinner indeed, if he needed such justification. The ability of Christ to make a perfect righteousness not only for him, but for the whole world, seems to have convinced him, without argument, of the Saviour's divinity; and he began at once to preach Christ crucified, to offer salvation to all men. The wall of separa-

tion between Jew and Gentile disappeared at once from his view ; he proclaimed the righteousness of God which is by faith in Jesus Christ, given to every human being for nothing.

He saw that he must come without meritorious preparation, waiting for no repentance, no remorse for sin ; that faith in the atoning sacrifice must be the one all-sufficient act of every sinner, which will be followed spontaneously by godly sorrow working repentance unto life.

Paul saw that "if the righteousness of God" by faith in Jesus Christ, was the appointed way of pardon, then he never could be good enough to be saved by his own merits. After being justified by faith through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, he might become as nearly perfect as human nature is capable of being. But no one was ever saved by this, nor can be, for "Neither is there salvation in any other ; for there is none other name under heaven, given among men, whereby we must be saved."

It is deeply interesting to know that this case of Paul's conversion, was intended as a pattern of all cases of conversion from his day. No one can suppose that circumstances of hours, place, language, and all the other incidents of each individual can be the same, any more than the unessential incidents of stature, place, and weather.

But this passage makes it plain that conversions are the same all around the globe. "Howbeit, for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show forth all long-suffering for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting."

It is loving-kindness in God, our Saviour, that He works by a plan in redemption, doing the self same things for all from age to age ; from Paul to each heir of grace in our day. Let every one, therefore, looking to Christ for converting mercy be assured of this, that "the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him." There is great encouragement in this to every one who may now and hereafter be a suppliant for his grace. Perhaps, some of us may be tempted to think, "there never was such a sinner as I ; no one ever trespassed against such long-suffering, abused such forbearance." Let him who is tempted thus to test the willingness of Christ to make him a subject of his grace, remember, that the man who said that "Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief," sets himself forever as a pattern of the Saviour's long-suffering to them who from that time forth should believe on him to life everlasting.

You may prove that He is able and willing to save you, by believing on Him, "to-day."

IV.

GOD OUR DWELLING, AND IN OUR DWELLING.

“He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High, shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.”— Psalm 91: 1.

WHERE is the secret place of the Most High? There is such a place, a habitable place, for the text speaks of dwelling there.

We can find it by two spiritual lines of measurement, as by latitude and longitude at sea. Longitude is not sufficient of itself, nor latitude, but bring the two together, and a child who has used a map knows how we determine places.

These two measures, both of which being used, determine the question suggested by the text. As there can be no other place like this in which a man can abide, it is an inconceivable privilege to have directions by which we can find it. This we can do with more certainty than we can find latitude and longitude. We will call it the rule of spiritual latitude and longitude. The longi-

tude, we will say, is the omnipresence of God. All do not practically believe that God is everywhere. "He that cometh to God must believe that he is," we may say without assumption. But this is not enough. Many will acknowledge this in words, while they have no realizing sense of it, as it is called, which makes it of practical value.

To know the longitude at sea would be of little use without another element in the calculation, the latitude; as to know the latitude without the longitude leaves the mariner bewildered. Frequently, a passing ship will set her signals to inquire of another ship, What is your longitude? though the latitude may have been determined by the sun at noon. Hence the other element of measure to find the secret place of the Most High, though we know him to be everywhere, is, A praying heart.

As there is not a place on land or at sea whose location cannot be determined by the two measures already given, so every place in this world of faith, which serves for sight, can be determined whether it be the secret place of the Most High. For as one does not know at sea where he is, without reckoning, so no one knows any place in the secret place of the Most High, unless he brings these two things in conjunction. 1st, God is here. 2d, I desire to draw near to Him in

prayer. By these two elements you may infallibly ascertain that your heart is the secret place of the Most High.

It is interesting to know that the place here mentioned is not confined to one spot. A man may always live under the same tent; the place where he eats and sleeps will always be a secret place to him; yet the tent may be moveable, sometimes in a valley, then on the side of a hill; then upon the hill top. So the secret place of the Most High is moveable. At the risk of dwelling too long on the figure, I will venture to say, that as there is no latitude at the poles, no longitude at Greenwich, because longitude is the distance east or west from Greenwich and latitude is the distance from either pole, this represents that which heaven will be to us, where there are no seeming distances from God; for we shall no more walk by faith but by continual sight. But on earth in all our journeyings toward heaven, we have constant need to find the secret place of the Most High, that is, a place of communion with God.

The promise in the text is to such as make praying their breath; who hold continued communion with God, referring all things to him as their fixed habit; breathing out love, adoration, confession, supplication, more intimately than they commune with the dearest friend. The

promise is, that they shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. This may signify several things, as 1st, Nearness. A child walking with you abides under your shadow ; you are never far from him, you keep him in sight, within reach. 2d, Protection ; you shade him against sun-stroke. So “the sun shall not smite them by day.”

As though encouraged by the declaration in this verse, this good man resolves to make experiment of it. “I will say of the Lord he is my refuge, and my fortress.” Such is the life of one who is godly. He applies the principles of earthly friendship to intercourse with God. Not a day passes when we do not need a refuge from apprehension. This good man says, “Be thou my strong habitation whereunto I may continually resort.”

There are assaults of conscience, temptation, affliction, calamity, pain. “I will say of the Lord, He is—*my God*.” Every thing seems to be summed up in these two words. They are the best which we can use ; they were the best which the Saviour could employ in the hour of his greatest need. “My God, my God !” He who can affectionately adopt them has all things. He never need fear. He may say, “In him will I trust.”

Some one here seems to speak in reply: “Surely

he shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler and from the noisome pestilence." The snare of the fowler is the peril of birds; they more easily see the sportsman and fly; but the snare with leaves and grain scattered over it, is laid in secret. Such is our source of danger. We do not see what a mistake we are about to fall into in a bargain, or investment, or friendship, or connection. Perhaps a winning pleasure is cunningly devised by the great fowler for your soul. God's eye is on you when yours is not on him, if it be your habit to dwell with God.

We look back in the course of the day in which we have experienced some great blessing, and remember that we reproached ourselves with not using such importunity or child-like love as would have been becoming; or perhaps a sudden call prevented our devotion; yet a wonderful mercy, or, some gratifying intelligence has arrived, and we say, "Thou preventest me with the blessings of goodness," anticipatest my wishes. You know by your words that you dwell in the secret place of the Most High, and God has rewarded you by looking after your interests.

We cannot estimate the benefit of frequent prayer. Influences to prayer should be followed; impressions which come over us when at work, or reading, or journeying, or waking from sleep. "Prayer and provender hinder no man's journey."

God stirs us up to pray, it may be, because he sees our coming need, or, because he will do us some good and would prepare us for it.

Birds flying into noxious atmosphere sometimes fall dead. There was nothing to mark between the pure and pestilential air. Thus, perhaps, we are venturing into error by hearing or reading something, or resorting to baleful companies. God may, perhaps, restrain you while you are not aware of it. You may wonder at some accident or interruption which kept you from going somewhere, as you intended ; you murmured, perhaps, at the rain or snow storm, you were disappointed, but God was thereby delivering you from the noisome pestilence. We see calamity happen to others through foolish mistakes. God has covered you with his feathers. Under protection from the parent bird, its young lie safe from the fowling piece, arrow, or bird of prey.

One source of security to the good is confidence in the truth of God. It serves as a shield and buckler. It was so with Joseph in Egypt, with Daniel in Babylon, and the three children in the fiery furnace ; such is their safety, that if a plague raged, and thousands die, they may escape. In battle, no weapon formed against them may prosper.

It is related in the life of Washington, that an Indian took aim at him several times when he

had reason to expect to see him fall, and he wondered that his shot failed. Perhaps he who guided David's sling turned aside the rifle ball. I heard a minister say in his pulpit that he knew a man who came to a friend's house at midnight, on horse back in a storm of rain, to the astonishment of the family who knew that the bridge had been carried away. In the morning they went to the river and found one of the timbers standing in the place across the stream, serving for a path to the horse's feet, so that the horse with more than animal sagacity, gave his rider to say of Him who preserved man and beast, "He maketh my feet like hind's feet." But terrible oftentimes is the end of the wicked. "Surely thou didst set them in slippery places."

True, one event outwardly seems often to happen to all, both to the righteous and the wicked; but far different to good men and bad men is death by accident. Sudden death is sudden glory to the good, while to the wicked it is sudden destruction.

In cases of detection, exposure, conviction, "only with their eyes shall they behold and see the reward of the wicked." Then to the good man is known the blessedness of a good conscience. Many are the congratulations in the book of Psalms and in Job to a good man, in contrast with the fate of the wicked. The sense of

safety which the righteous man has when he pours out his heart to his preserver, appealing to him for a witness, "Thou knowest that I am not wicked," is a full recompense for self-denial in refusing to court human praise.

God loves and rewards confidence in him. We are moved to do the same when it is showed to us. Few things are more grateful to us. We are always liable to suspicion in some minds. You do things which perhaps you cannot explain. Some, therefore, speak ill of you, and forsake you. Others give you credit for good motives when some things are dark. So we are led to feel confidence in God. Then, "because thou hast made the Lord, which is thy refuge, even the Most High, thy habitation ; there shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling."

Strange promise in such an evil world as this : "there shall no evil befall thee." It will prove to be "no evil." The promises are fulfilled by equivalents ; thereby faith is encouraged, perhaps rewarded. If we take God as he offers himself to us, he takes us with all our concerns, our frailties, mistakes ; he identifies us with himself ; it is practically the same as though every one who makes God his refuge, his habitation, were omnipotent. "If God be for us," not only who is, but "who can be against us?" The

forces of the universe are on our side. Think of the meaning in such words as these: "thy habitation." Then, God is our dwelling. What is your dwelling to you? Such is God. Nor is it an accidental expression; "he that loveth dwelleth in God and God in him." Can any plague come nigh such a dwelling to do real harm? But dwellings can be plagued in other ways than by pestilence. We experience other forms of salvation when we are kept from being plagued, by evil dispositions, from annoyances which make life burdensome. When sickness is healed, and the joy of restoration succeeds trouble, rich fruits of gratitude, spiritual benefits of many kinds, compensate for the sickness; that which is called an evil is converted into a blessing.

No doubt there are angels in the dwelling of every one who fears God. If we thought that angels were moving about in our habitations, those dwellings would seem hallowed. "He shall give his angels charge over thee to keep thee in all thy ways." God says, Behold my servant is beginning a journey, or entering into a ship. Go with him in all his ways. Keep the ship from collisions; fly before the locomotive; see that the track is right, watch every revolution of the wheels, "lest at any time he dash his foot against a stone."

If it be necessary in order to accomplish some

important purpose that there should be shipwreck or other calamity, He can say, Guard his life; defend the vital part; he is an heir of glory; minister to him.

. Every one who discharges his duty, sooner or later meets with opposition. All who live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer some form of tribulation. It is easy in some cases to evade it. Some dread responsibility; which it is true we ought neither to seek nor shun; but when God lays it upon us, we may incur both secret and open hostilities. There is "the lion and adder," the dragon, with power at least to terrify. If you have truth on your side, if you meekly trust in God, he will cause you to tread on them all. "Behold I will make them which are of the synagogue of Satan which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie, behold I will make them to come and to worship at thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee."

Not by our own right hand or wisdom will this appear; God will shape events, who alone doeth wonders. He can turn the Euphrates from its channel in one night, and fill Babylon with her enemies as with caterpillars; He can make a barley cake tumble into the camp of Midian and overthrow a multitude; He can cause an iron gate to open of its "own accord," and let the wondering prisoner pass through; He can make even

the wrath of man to praise him and restrain the remainder. He turns the tides of popular feeling. To-day one is caressed, to-morrow the world is in arms against him. Yesterday one was contemned, to-morrow there may be none like him in almost universal esteem. Now a set of principles are repudiated; soon they are adopted as the only salvation.

A good man seldom need go about to defend his character by hunting down reports. He has only to do right, trust in God, and everything will be well. People often judge at once by results. If a viper fastens on a man's hand, the barbarians think that he is doomed; but when he shakes it off feeling no harm, they change their minds and say that he is a god.

Now God speaks, confirming the Psalmist's words; and we cannot doubt that the Most High reciprocates every act of love: "Because he hath set his love upon me, therefore will I deliver him." There never was any misplaced confidence in God, however we may have erred in our judgment of ourselves. "For the Lord is good to them that wait for him, to the soul that seeketh him. The prophet Isaiah says, "For since the beginning of the world men have not heard, what he hath prepared for him that waiteth for him."

Not only will God deliver the righteous man:

“I will set him on high because he hath known my name.” It would not always be safe for God to set us on high; it is only safe when he has made us humble; when we have forborne to avenge ourselves. If one undertakes to avenge himself, God may stand aloof and let him try. But if we have made him our strong tower into which we run for safety, in due time he not only delivers us, but sets us on high. He causes us to triumph; He exalts us above destruction, shields us from malice, gives us signal prosperity. What can be better than this: “He shall call upon me and I will answer him.” Let God answer when we speak, and all is well. Let a rich man say that he will honor any draft you may make upon him, and it may put you at ease. Let one feel that he has only to speak and friends come and stand around him; and he is at peace.

But will he never be troubled? God says that he will. “I will be with him in trouble.” We are not worth much till we have been in trouble. We would not part with troubles which we feel have been blest to us. You would not but have had a sorrow which has proved a spiritual blessing. What would Daniel now take for the lions’ den? or the Hebrew children for their being cast into Nebuchadnezzar’s furnace? or Peter, for his experience in Herod’s prison? or John, for his history while in the isle which is called Patmos?

The best thing which God can do for a man sometimes, is to put him in a place like one of these, and be with him in it. Truly, this may be better than prosperity. When we are in prosperity he may only keep us there. But if he is with us in trouble he says, "I will deliver him and honor him." It makes men afraid when they see God appear in behalf of a man. As we read the songs of Hannah and Mary, we are particularly struck with their allusions to their enemies, the exultation with which they triumph over adversaries. We are made to say, "Blessed are all they that put their trust in him."

Thus it will be with the righteous till life has been so full of the goodness of God that the man will say, It is enough. When his time to die arrives, though it be sudden, he may start, nature may tremble; but soon he grows calm and reflects: I have had full experience of God's love; all that life can teach me and do for me, I have known; its joys, its trials have had their designed effect upon me.

"Why should not fruit when it is mellow, fall;
What do we longer here when God doth call?"

By "showing him my salvation," God does not mean merely "bring him safely to heaven," but in getting him there will reveal the wonders of the way.

A party of persecuted Huguenots fled, and mounted up a high place in a stormy night. When the sun rose they came down and saw the way by which they came, narrow, precipitous, full of sudden turns. They stood and prayed, and sung; God showed them his salvation. Thus you will be led by the Most High and revisit all the eventful places of your earthly pilgrimage; places now dark and sad. "And show him my salvation." As the morning of the third day of creation broke on the former world, revealing some of the works of God and disclosing further designs, so the light of heaven will fall on his doings with you, and you will see that all was good.

We have been considering some of the richest and sweetest of the blessings which God bestows on man. The Psalm which we have but imperfectly analyzed, contains in one of its passages the conditions on which they are given. "He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty." We have seen that this passage has a paraphrase in the second verse: "I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge and my fortress; my God; in him will I trust." It may seem a truism to say that religion is a most simple thing; but a poet has ventured to say the same of the firmament:

“Like that which o’er our head we see,
Majestic in its own simplicity.”

The Apostle John, in his Epistles, gives us in his style of thought, some wonderful correspondent incidents of simplicity which awaken surprise, as for example: “This then is the message which we have heard of him, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.” “No lie is of the truth.” “If we ask any thing according to his will he heareth us.”

Religion is to love God, “to whom we have access by faith, through our Lord Jesus Christ.” Religion is so simple that the young may understand it as well as the learned. We see this confirmed now and then in some young persons who have decided not to go the first half of the journey of life without him; that it is best to have God for their guard and guide at the outset. Even one who is old enough to have a conscience may consider whether he is not old enough to love God. We should not fail to notice the connection of these words: “I love them that love me.” We say then confidently to the young: This Psalm may be yours. The piece of paper on which it can be written is not so large as a title deed to a ten foot dwelling; yet the Lord who dictated it, you may have made your refuge, and the Most High your habitation. God manifest in the flesh in the person

of Jesus, who was once precisely at your age, and without whom not a sparrow falleth to the ground, will not be more pleased with the love of angels, who always behold his face, than He is with the love of the young, whom the Saviour bids men take heed that they do not despise. Seek early this God and Saviour; the promise to all such is, They shall find me.

Let every one set up an altar in their hearts and at their hearths. Make God your dwelling, and the Most High will make your house His habitation.

V.

THE JEW AND THE ROMAN WATCH- ING THE SEPULCHRE.

“Pilate said unto them, Ye have a watch : go your way, make it as sure as you can. So they went, and made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone, and setting a watch.” — Matthew 27 : 65, 66.

HERE we see the Jew and the Roman watching the Sepulchre of Christ while he lies entombed. God was about to complete the work of man's redemption by raising up Christ from the dead.

Notwithstanding their avowed unbelief, we cannot but think the approaching resurrection of Christ threw a shadow on the hearts of his enemies. Had they been thoroughly satisfied that he was an impostor, all that they would need to show would be the proofs of his dying, to answer any future pretence of his being alive. Their endeavors to forestall the expected assertion of his disciples, that Christ had come to life, proves that they regarded his resurrection possible.

Putting a living man in the tomb and stealing away the dead Christ, seems too clumsy a trick to give the enemies of Christ any real apprehension. Concerning whom else did men ever feel it necessary to use precautions against his pretended resurrection, beyond an undoubted evidence that he had died? We would not bring a hasty accusation against the enemies of Christ, it would be in marked contrast with the evangelists so to do. But when you remember that men had seen Lazarus raised from the dead by the word of Christ, the daughter of Jairus and the widow of Nain's son brought back from death by his command, would it not have been strange had they not expected something supernatural at his tomb? Graves had opened when he died; might not the same happen at his tomb? The disciples probably had little if any confidence that he who could suffer himself to be betrayed and crucified, was able to make good any promise of rising from the dead.

Guilty consciences frequently will apprehend dangers when the innocent fail to expect help. Therefore, the fears of the Jews were more than the hopes of the Christians; so that they used measures to prevent the evidence of a resurrection from transpiring; not merely to keep thieves away from the tomb. They enlisted the Roman authority to aid them in confuting the Saviour's

promise to re-appear on the third day. The chief priests and Pharisees came together unto Pilate, saying, "Sir, we remember that that deceiver said, while he was yet alive, After three days I will rise again. Command, therefore, that the sepulchre be made sure until the third day, lest his disciples come by night, and steal him away, and say unto the people. He is risen from the dead: so the last error shall be worse than the first." Their fears of the resurrection and their efforts to prevent it, show how reasonable it is for the Scriptures to lay such stress on the resurrection as the crowning proof of the Saviour's claims. The life and the death of Christ had not failed to make his enemies feel uneasy. A voluntary watch could have sufficed in ordinary cases, but they would have something more imperative, an official guarantee from the government, which would admit of no suspicion nor resistance. Having no civil authority they were obliged to invoke the aid of the Roman Pilate for an official watch. He granted their request. "Ye have a watch," (a government guard stationed near the temple) "go your way, make it (the sepulchre) as sure as ye can. So they went their way and made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone and setting a watch." Sealing it so that the soldiers and the Christians could not conspire without detection.

in Christ volunteered to spend the two nights and the one day, on guard before the tomb, to place it beyond doubt that it was He who had slept there that had returned to life. But God who did not forsake his soul in Hades, provided for the Saviour a surer testimony. For we immediately see that however honestly intended, so partial, so interested a guardianship as that of his disciples would not have been wise. The Jews could have said, The Christians had a guard of their own; of course they had opportunity to do as they pleased in the sepulchre. The best thing for the Christians, therefore, was to be drawn away from the tomb. The less they were seen there, the better it would be for their reputation with their enemies. Let those enemies watch over the dead body of the Lord, thereby doing the thing most essential to placing the resurrection beyond all possible doubt. This his enemies did of their own accord.

The wisest of men could not have contrived so excellent a scheme. If some of the Christians, say, Joseph of Arimathea himself, wishing that the Saviour's promise to rise on the third day should have a perfectly fair trial, had requested Pilate to set a guard over the sepulchre, Pilate might have been suspected of conniving to favor the impression of the Saviour's having risen. Pilate's wife, who had suffered many

things in a dream because of him, could have been charged as accessory to the plot. No, let the enemies of Christ in their malice, be known as having sole custody of the Saviour's tomb, for so they will be able to satisfy themselves of his resurrection if he is to rise. His enemies will not surely steal the body, nor use surgical arts; it is for their interest to keep the tomb so sealed up as to prevent a resurrection, or a removal of the body which might give semblance to a pretended resurrection.

That which no wisdom nor contrivance of the Saviour's friends could by any means accomplish, was done for them without their agency, by their foes. The faithful Joseph and Nicodemus were superseded as watchers over the crucified Redeemer, by the civil power. The very murderers of Jesus were used by God to take the best possible care of his body, and of his tomb. None but God, however, could influence them to assume it. The Christians could not have made them do it. Suppose that the Christians had challenged them to keep watch. Their cowardly consciences, struck with the bold assurances, might have shrunk from the test.

The last divinely appointed passover had now come. The moon which lighted Israel out of Egypt after the first, now rose on the last of the passovers; their appointment receiving its ful-

filment in the completed mission of the Son of God.

Our earth must have become intensely interesting to angels, with the Prince of life sealed up in one of its sepulchres, and with him the hopes of prophets and the whole church of God, past, present, and to come. What if that tomb is now sealed up forever? He who said, "I am the resurrection and the life," is dead. The Roman power has taken in charge the sepulchre by allowing its guard to watch there. All the Christians have gone from the spot in fear; or such is their distrust of their Lord's promise to rise again that they have brought sweet spices to embalm his body, as if God were about to suffer his Holy One to see corruption. Had they expected him to rise the third day, of course no sweet spices had been necessary. Grief and bewildering fear are in their hearts, triumph fills their enemies, for imperial Rome itself, has condescended to help the crucifiers of Jesus, in demonstrating the falsehood of "that deceiver."

And when at length God had fully served himself of the Roman arm through its representative, Pontius Pilate, when the royal authority had stood guard long enough over the tomb of his dear Son to make it as clear as demonstration that the tomb had not been violated, that neither an ingenious plot nor a mistaken friendship had

thrown the shadow of a doubt on the question whether the Christ that was laid in the tomb was there still, then, very early in the morning of the third day, while it was yet dark, a single angel descended from heaven and rolled away the stone from the door of the sepulchre and sat upon it.

What became of that cord which was stretched across the tomb door? Who dared to break those seals with the device of the Jewish principal men upon them? See you not those three crosses standing yet on Calvary? Beware lest you be hurried to one of them by the same power which sent the impostor of Nazareth to die there.

O, that moment unequalled in the history of this planet, and not to be surpassed at the consummation of all things, when the victim of Calvary walked forth from that sepulchre and stood upon the earth. Not when he shall stand upon the earth at the latter day, will his triumph be more sublime. Not then will adoring angels greet him with stronger love than that which must have flooded their souls when they cried one to another, He is risen!

Honored angels! who can you be among the sons of the mighty to have gained that distinction from God to lay your hand on that stone and unseal that door? One might have given you

every throne on earth for that seat of yours upon that stone. We fancy that you are that Gabriel who appeared to a virgin espoused to a man named Joseph of the house of David, saying, "Hail, thou that art highly favored among women, the Lord is with thee; blessed art thou among women." How appropriate for that same angel to announce before her the resurrection of her son.

But no! for the mother of Jesus is not among the women at the tomb. Can we believe it? Consonant with our thoughts and wishes it would have been, had Gabriel repeated his annunciation to her at the door of her son's deserted sepulchre. Surely this angel is no Papist. Raphael, Rubens, all the papal artists, would have had Mary at the door of the sepulchre in her Son's arms. But there is not a word concerning Mary in connection with the Resurrection. We do not hear of her till in the Acts of the Apostles we find her mentioned among those who assembled after the ascension. What a divine touch is there in the absence of Mary, and of the mere human affectionateness of mother and child. Earthly relationships which we are all so apt to exalt over the spiritual and heavenly, are not recognized in the stupendous scenes of the Resurrection.

Therefore, it may not have been Gabriel, — perhaps it was Michael the archangel who sat

upon that stone. For it was Michael who disputed with the devil in Moab about the body of Moses; now, perhaps he disputes with Cæsar, and Pontius Pilate, and Rome, and Jerusalem, about the body of Jesus. Thus Moses and the Lamb were both of them, perhaps, for a time in charge of the archangel. His first dispute with Satan was safely burying the body of Moses. This was to pluck from him that had the power of death, the Resurrection and the Life.

We are strongly impelled to fancy that it was the archangel who has in charge the resurrection of the dead, who rolled away the stone from the door of the sepulchre. Most appropriate would it be that he who has in charge the graves of God's elect, should be detailed to preside at the resurrection of Him who is the Resurrection and the Life.

If the archangel Michael is one principal figure of this drama, who is the principal figure on the other side? Pontius Pilate! Think of this, ye followers of Jesus, and be not faithless but believing. Unbeliever! Pontius Pilate is your representative; ours is Jesus, the Resurrection and the Life.

If there were ever any raptures in this world equalling the raptures of heaven, it must have been when the Christians saw how God had raised up Jesus. We remember how much is said in

the New Testament of the "mighty power" of God in raising up Christ,—“according to the working of his mighty power which he wrought in Christ when he raised him from the dead.” But it was not so much the simple act of omnipotence in bringing him to life which illustrated the power of God, as the scheme by which his wisdom was employed to counteract the designs of the wicked. Prominent among the great acts of God in connection with this event, no doubt, was the divine contrivance by which he made his enemies and the enemies of his Son keep possession of that crucified body till it came to life. God has placed the body of his Son in the hands of his enemies to make plainly certain his resurrection. A man never feels more humbled ; is never placed in a more embarrassing predicament, than when his adversary makes him the means of showing the folly of his own doings.

We may venture to imagine how the Chief Priests and Pharisees bit their lips and hardly looked each other in the face when they saw that their own cunning was the evident means of proving the identity of Christ at his resurrection. “How much better,” no doubt they said, “if instead of sealing up the sepulchre and keeping watch over it, we had let the tomb remain open, and so had given the Christians a chance to steal the body ; then there could have been no possi-

bility of proving conclusively that Christ came to life. But we ourselves have furnished the essential evidence of his identity. No friends could so well have done this. We are caught in our own net, and in the pit which we have digged have we fallen ourselves."

You see what power of meaning is thus given to such passages as these: "But God raised him from the dead," and those words once before quoted: "According to the working of his mighty power which He wrought in Christ when He raised him from the dead." It shows more wisdom to do a thing by wise contrivance against opposition than by a mere word of omnipotence. Therefore, when the Christians saw what was done, and received again from the dead their infinite Friend, we may ask, Which filled them with the greatest pleasure, which imparted the greatest strength to their hearts,—that Christ was risen, or the manifest interposition of the Almighty in effecting it? Surely that word, "Thou didst it," was after all the foundation of their joy.

I. THIS PASSAGE OF SACRED HISTORY ILLUSTRATES THE TRUTH THAT GOD HAS "MADE ALL THINGS FOR HIMSELF, YEA, EVEN THE WICKED FOR THE DAY OF EVIL."

"There is no counsel nor wisdom nor understanding against the Lord."

Many think of God, of his attributes and providence, as mere conveniences, useful upon occasions. Human affairs, they seem to think, are governed by an eternal necessity they know not what, and God appears in them to keep them steady with a little help, no more, however, than a steersman renders in keeping a ship true to the wind, over which wind, however, he has no control. The true doctrine in opposition to this is, that man and his affairs are appointed instruments in the hands of One of whom, and by whom, and through whom are all things, to make God himself known, for the one hundred and seventh Psalm, and all the Hebrew triumphal odes are mainly occupied in glorifying God; not in chronicling the marching of a host, but the stately goings of the Most High.

The Red Sea was for God to show his power, the famine was for his gift of the manna and quails, the thirst was for the rock to be smitten; the rebellion against Moses and Aaron was for the earth to open; the hard pursuit of Saul around the hill to cut off David was for God to send the messenger to Saul saying, The Philistines are invading the land. Jehosaphat's invasion by the children of the east was for an angel of the Lord to slay a hundred and eighty-five thousand of them in one night. Peter was imprisoned that an earthquake might open the

doors of the prison. Paul and Silas were beaten and put in the stocks, to make their jailor ask a question, echoing through all ages, "What must I do to be saved?"

And so the sleeping Saviour was affectionately guarded against any injudicious act on the part of his friends, and was delivered over to his enemies for safe-keeping against them, and to convince the world that no stratagem had confounded his identity; in order that he who was to be the Resurrection and the Life might be declared to be the Son of God with power by the Spirit of holiness which raised him from the dead.

II. SOME CHRISTIANS ARE CHOSEN OF GOD TO DISPLAY BY THEIR GREAT TRIALS HIS POWER AND WISDOM, AS CHRIST WAS BY HIS DEATH AND BURIAL AND RESURRECTION.

Such Christians may be said to have been statuary marble, while other blocks were used merely for doorsteps and posts, employed for the divine artisan to show some immortal statue. So that we shall hereafter say, "Behold, happy is the man whom God correcteth:" and we would gladly send from heaven this message to surviving friends, — "therefore despise not thou the chastening of the Almighty." It is an honor to have God interest himself in your affairs;

making use of them as He does of the black cloud, to bend the rainbow upon it.

The wickedness of men instead of casting us down, ought to make us look for the appointed time when God will show his power and make his wrath known. Is there a more terrible thing said against bad men than this? "When the wicked spring as the grass and when all the workers of iniquity do flourish, it is that they shall be destroyed forever." Thus if the prosperity of the wicked shall destroy them, it should never dishearten us.

In bad times, moreover, we may be sure God is carrying on his work in many an upright heart. The dreadful temptations which infest our cities and large towns, appealing to the senses with arts which venture closer every year to the brink of shamelessness, are strengthening the virtue of such as make the first Psalm their rule, and "walk not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stand in the way of sinners, nor sit in the seat of the scornful."

III. BAD MEN SHOULD BE OBJECTS OF PITY RATHER THAN OF FEAR OR ANGER.

In the first place, there is an eternity of weeping before them unless they repent; and in the next place, one of their chief sorrows there will

be that all their deep laid plots were made use of by the Most High to accomplish his purposes. We do not see how the work of redemption could have been accomplished had it not been for such men as Judas and Pontius Pilate. "The Lord hath made all things for himself, yea, even the wicked for the day of evil." Some enemy must draw the cord across the door of the sepulchre and seal it and set the guard, to keep the dead Christ from the well-meant approach of his friends ; else the proofs of his coming forth alive will not be complete.

Finally,—

EVERY THING RELATING TO THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST IS UNSPEAKABLY INTERESTING FOR THIS REASON, "HE WAS RAISED AGAIN FOR OUR JUSTIFICATION."

Many do not see the reason of this ; they do not appreciate the evident stress which the Scriptures lay upon Christ's rising from the dead. So long as he died, they feel that their redemption was made complete. Let us submit our pre-conceived opinions to the Divine will. The satisfaction which Christ made to divine justice was not publicly acknowledged by God till he had raised Christ from the dead. Had he not been raised, the plan of redemption would not have

been completed. He "was declared to be the Son of God with power by the spirit of holiness which raised him from the dead." We were not to be saved by a dead Christ. In Roman Catholic countries we see many dead Christs. He must die for our sins, it is true, but as a Saviour he is not made perfect till it can be said, "It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again." Had his bones been broken on the cross like those of the thieves, his death, indeed, would have been equally effectual; but it was not the purpose of God to redeem us by subjecting the crucified body of his Son to the needless indignity of maiming. The same Divine wisdom chose that a dead Christ should not be a perfected Redeemer. We are glad that we are not justified by a dead Christ. Had we been, we should receive him as now we accept the whole mystery of redemption,— "but God raised him from the dead," and "by him we believe in God who raised him from the dead and gave him glory," and we receive him just as he is revealed, a risen Redeemer, all his work of satisfaction for our sins sealed by the Almighty when he raised him from the dead.

Therefore consider what a glorious thing it is to be justified by faith in Christ, seeing that such an event as his resurrection was essential to make him perfect as your Redeemer.

If everything else in your Redeemer is as

great and glorious as his resurrection, you who have had this Christ imputed to you as your righteousness, have received from God the greatest of all his gifts.

Believer ! God has already done for you spiritually that "which he wrought in Christ when he raised him from the dead and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places." You are redeemed if you are in Christ. All that Christ is, all that Christ has done, is made over to you by your simply believing in Him. All the powers of sin in earth and hell cannot hinder your salvation.

The sign of the cross is to you the symbol of the atoning death of your Redeemer ; the breaking, by the hand of God, of that seal which the Jew and the Roman had placed upon the Redeemer's tomb, is the sign and pledge of your completed redemption. "Rejoice evermore." "Pray without ceasing." "In every thing give thanks."

"Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ," to every one who yet needs his grace ; "as though God did beseech you by us ; we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God." We preach unto you Jesus and the Resurrection. The hour is at hand when nothing else will seem to you of any importance. Therefore "seek the things which are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God."

VI.

THE MAN AT THE WHEEL.

(WRITTEN AT SEA.)

"Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory."—Psalm 73: 24.

DURING a long voyage few things interested me more than the man at the wheel.

While some of the crew were heaving the anchor, one sailor took his place at the wheel, pointing the ship on her course before the anchor had risen a few feet from the ground.

In a voyage of a hundred and eleven days to San Francisco, and thence to the Sandwich Islands, China, the East Indies and New York, there was a man at the wheel every moment, day and night, in storm and sunshine. Every man, except the officers, was in his turn two hours at a time during the whole voyage, the man at the wheel. Not till the word of command was given

inside the Golden Gate, "Let go the anchor," was the wheel deserted. Every two hours, the man at the wheel was relieved by some shipmate who knew when it came his turn. The man at the wheel would say what point of the compass must be kept in mind; the man taking his place would repeat his words. "South west by south half south," says the man who seizes the wheel to take his place.

Going on deck at midnight there is the man at the wheel. Coming up to watch the sunrise you salute the man at the wheel. During a gale, if you venture on deck curious to see the swelling ocean, you find the man at the wheel. In a dead calm, the ship motionless, there stands the man at the wheel. The sea runs high, the wave looks down upon you as though it would swallow you up. "Meet her!" cries the mate; the man at the wheel swings the bowsprit in the teeth of the billow; you go up to the heavens; then down again into the deep.

You always feel on shipboard that there is one man doing something for you. During divine service on Sabbath morning, two men at least, are always absent, one, the officer of the deck, the other, the man at the wheel. If you start in your sleep you instantly think, There is at least one who is awake, the man at the wheel. I never passed him day or night, without giving

and receiving a salutation. You feel that he is your personal friend.

The compass lies directly in front of the wheel; the binnacle lamp shines all night upon the compass, which points the way the ship is headed, and the man at the wheel is told to keep her so. If the wind sets her off her course the endeavor is to get as near to it as the wind will allow, keeping the sails "full and by" the wind, the steersman using his discretion how to do so.

One cannot see himself thus continually kept on his course through the deep without being reminded that if he is a child of God, he has Christ Jesus as the man at the wheel to his soul as truly as at every moment of a voyage, however long, he has a man at the wheel of his ship. Without presumption, but with the utmost confidence, with full assurance of faith, every one who loves God may say to the Saviour, "Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory." He may be as confident of the incessant guidance of his soul by Christ, as the passenger is of the perpetual service of a man at the wheel.

It used to occur to me, Suppose that instead of having twenty-eight men taking turn, each of them two hours at a time, to steer me across the globe, the service were done by a single man who, day and night should be my steersman, standing

every moment at the wheel, buffeted by the gale, pelted by the rain, scorched by the sun, straining every sense in the dark nights to guard against collisions, till finally I should see the anchor dropped in the desired haven, without any casualty, delay, loss, damage, from the beginning to the end of the voyage, I could not part with that man without emotions unutterable. Yet here I am on the voyage of life with One at the wheel who has been there from my infancy to the present hour, to whom I may with joyful confidence repeat these words, "Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterwards receive me to glory."

We bless the memory of this translator who used the word "shalt" in this passage, instead of "wilt." He lets David here speak not prophetically, but trustfully, confiding himself to divine guidance, not merely foretelling that he will be guided, but declaring his willingness to be. There may be all the difference between a believer and unbeliever in saying "shalt" rather than "wilt" in such a case as this; whether you as from the heart, avouch the Lord God to be your Supreme ruler, or merely declare that He will be. Using here the word "shalt," implies a cordial choice of divine guidance. He who has made such choice has the hand of infinite love on his helm. Some helms seem to have no

hand upon them. They steer wild. They are blown about ; sometimes they are in the trough of the sea ; they have broached to ; some of them go down forever.

One would think that none would need to be repeatedly told, "In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths." We meet vessels of every maritime country at sea, and every one of them has a man at the wheel. It is not thus with all on the voyage of life. By the way in which some steer, you might almost imagine Satan at the helm. But there are others who have made that inspired direction their rule : "In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths." It was so with a good man, foreign born, who had lately found a home in one of our cities as missionary, who was offered a situation instead of one which he then filled. The gentleman urgently requested his answer at once. The good man replied, "O, not now ; I have not mentioned it to the Lord."

The Old Testament everywhere makes the impression on a serious reader, of God's particular providence. If any are ever inclined to unbelief, there is a portion of Scripture biography where we should suppose that they would as soon as any where, stumble. We might ask them, not, "Do you believe that Joshua made the sun and moon to stand still ; but, Can you believe

that the being who made the worlds, once came to the bedside of a boy, called to him, "Samuel! Samuel!" and when the child awoke he ran to Eli, and was told by him to lie down again for he did not call him; God came the second time and called, "Samuel! Samuel!" and the child went to Eli again, and again was sent back to his bed, and the third time God came and called, and again he insisted that Eli did speak, and Eli perceiving that God had called the child, told him to answer accordingly, and the fourth time God came and said, "Samuel! Samuel!" and then broke to him his purposes and made the child his messenger, acquainting him with some of his purposes, — I repeat the question, can you believe this? Will you believe it? Do you believe it? then you are in one good sense a believer; you have a commendable faith; you only need to exercise the same simple confidence in the New Testament, to have in a more important sense, faith, which, accompanied by heartfelt reliance on Christ as the sinners substitute before the law of God, answering its righteous demands by his atoning death, would make you to be in all respects a believer, as truly as Abraham was who, in an exemplary sense, was the father of all them that believe. If you believe in the historical narratives of any of the Old Testament miracles, it may be gratifying to you

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to know that the words of David in the text, can by the help of the Holy Spirit be acted upon by you, will be, as soon as you are willing to say with David, to David's Lord and David's son, "Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory."

This faith may be exercised by you through the operation of God at any moment. For wherein does the greatness of God consist? There is one thing in the acts of God too great for some men to believe. Not that he made the distant planet Uranus. I never met with one who could not believe that which astronomers tell us of his perturbations and their probable cause. But I have met with men who, while they believed all this, could not believe that this God numbers the hairs of their heads, or that not a sparrow falls to the ground without him. That was too much for their faith; which proves that God's condescension is more incredible to many, than his omnipotence.

It is not too much to believe that God may have arranged and has in mind at one and the same moment myriads of worlds, their geology, mineralogy, crystallogeny, botany, their animals and birds; but that such a Being will guide a man with his counsel, and afterward receive him to glory, is oftentimes too much for faith. With no more power to explain this than others, you

believe it. That willingness to believe it so implicitly is one kind of faith ; only exercise it with the heart in regard to the words of Christ in what he says of the soul, its present character, its destiny, the way in which alone it can be saved ; and then, for there is still one thing without which all this faith will prove useless, with all your heart accept the offers of this Redeemer, love him, be his disciple, and consentingly say to him, "Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterwards receive me to glory." There are some who have believed all this who do not have the consolation to which they are entitled, because they fail to keep this faith in exercise.

Instead of reading treatises on faith, and trying to understand speculations on things beyond our knowledge, they will be far more happy, for they will make more progress in religious knowledge, if they will sit by the side of Samuel's bed, listening to the Almighty as he talked with him. I owe more to talk with children after they had gone to bed than to books, if I ever have had lessons in faith. Their inquiries, which I could not answer ; their implicit but wondering acquiescence in my statements, have taught me more than the teachings of men, how to receive with meekness, the engrafted word which is able to save the soul. Their confidence in my love and care has done more than

many other things esteemed among men, to make me understand how I am to love God, and how God loves them who trust in Him.

That which the sailor when he is at the wheel does for all on board, He who is the "Wonderful, Counsellor," accomplishes, but in a far higher sense, every moment day and night, for his believing child. The hands of the man at the wheel are in effect tied to it while he is on duty as steersman. There is One who can at the same time act for us in the capacity of the man at the wheel, but also do everything else needed by us on the voyage.

It was kind in the captain of our ship to close our window shutters for us one night in a terrific storm of lightning off the Rio de la Plata, that we might sleep. So the watchman of Israel sometimes closes the senses of a dying friend when about to pass through the valley of the shadow of death; suffering the friendly delirium to act the part of a veil. In numberless ways does he make kind offices act the part of friends when indeed friends could not discern our need; or render aid, even could they discern our necessity. Christ is doing wondrous acts of kindness for us all the time. When you are asleep he is perhaps directing the thoughts of some who on the other side of the globe are at that instant, under their noonday sun, inditing letters which may deeply affect your welfare.

While we are under the guidance of this omniscient, omnipotent Friend, it is wonderful that we are in full possession of free agency. I have already quoted the command which the mate sometimes gives to one steering, when he sees an enormous wave ready to break over the side of the ship. "Meet her!" he cries; an elliptical sea phrase, meaning, make her meet it; so instead of suffering the billow to swamp the ship by coming upon her broadside, she by turning a little out of course rides the wave safely. Thus he sometimes says to us in view of a coming duty or danger, "Meet her." With the word he fills the heart with inward strength. We seem to be making use of self-inspired courage, but it is God that worketh in us to will and to do of his good pleasure.

Was it mere fancy when I said that some souls make one feel as though Satan was at their helm? No, for the Bible speaks of the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience; it tells us to admonish them, that they may recover themselves "out of the snare of the devil, who are led captive by him at his will."

In the days of Odin and Thor in Great Britain, and in times of witchcraft in some parts of our country, we know how fearful a thing it was for one to believe himself possessed by an evil spirit. It is enough to make the stoutest heart shudder to

read in the New Testament of one wholly given up to the possession of the devil and his legions. The Apostle Peter says to Christians, "Be sober, be vigilant, because your adversary the devil, walketh about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour!" If then, even the best of men are liable to be his prey, how must it be with those who tempt the devil with hearts standing wide open, filled with wicked passions and evil desires, thus soliciting the devil instead of waiting to be tempted.

Such are we, if not under the protection of Christ. Every heart is either under the protection of, or led captive by, the evil one. If we are under the protection of Christ, guided by his counsel, we are safe in any place, in the worst company, if we are there against our will or without our choice. Daniel and his companions were safe in the palace of Babylon. Joseph was safe in Potiphar's house. I have known young men and boys subject day and night to the worst examples, in the forecastle and on shore, who seemed to be purified by the fiery furnace of sin which burned around them. In their prayers they could say, "Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel."

We notice the way in which God is said to guide "with his counsel," and not by force. "I will guide thee with mine eye." We must

give heed to the suggestions of conscience. "Behold also the ships, which though they be so great and are driven of fierce winds, yet are they turned about with a very small helm, whithersoever the governor listeth." When we take the Bible in our hands it should be with prayer.

The suggestions of the Holy Spirit are "the man at the wheel" in our souls. God, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, it is not too much to say, will be to each one that which is represented by a human hand upon the helm of a ship. It is not too late to regain Him if we have lost his guidance. When we find ourselves in evil company, we may be sure that we have not been led thither by the Divine Author of the First Psalm. Some will have this for their painful reflection without end:—My Saviour, the Judge, offered to be "the man at the wheel" to my soul. We may from this hour have him whose name is "Wonderful, Counsellor," to guide us through life and afterward receive us to glory. It was not a meaningless record. "Then they willingly received him into the ship, and immediately the ship was at the land whither they went."

VII.

THE BRIEF MENTION OF ASTRONOMY IN GENESIS.

"He made the stars also."—Genesis 1: 16.

The narrative of creation passes over the stars with brief notice. After saying that God made two great lights, the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night, it says in the Hebrew,—*"the stars also."* The words, *"He made"* are in italics.

The stars had been created when Genesis was written. The nearest fixed star was twenty billions of miles from the earth. As light travels two hundred thousand miles a second, if a star in Centaurus for example, had been struck out of existence at the death of Moses, it would be more than eleven thousand years hence before its light would disappear; the star would for that length of time be apparently in the same place. The planets being at their nearest ap-

proach to one another so distant, there must be solitudes between them inconceivable; so that could we measure the universe by its solitudes alone, no finite mind can conceive of its boundaries.

While this was before the mind of God, nothing is disclosed in revelation unless in keeping with the limited knowledge of the age when the Bible began to be written. That limited knowledge was to be stationary for thousands of years. We can conceive what perplexity would confuse the minds of men should the pen of inspiration write in a way transcending the knowledge of men, on a subject which takes such hold upon human curiosity as astronomy. A benevolent regard for human happiness would need to say a great deal, if it said anything, upon this subject. This would be opening the gates of knowledge more than was consistent with the scheme of providence. None but infinite wisdom could keep the gates of knowledge so closely barred that some disclosure would not inadvertently betray the secrets of nature; say something which would make men half insane to know what was meant when they could not be told without disclosing things so many and so profound, that many would turn astrologers.

We know what mischief was wrought by astrology. We may confidently say that the silence

of the Bible is a powerful proof that it is the book of God. There is something more interesting than science, something more important than the starry world. It is not life eternal to know what are the sweet influences of Pleiades, the bands of Orion.

The book which the Most High wrote for men is not a book of science. You would suppose from much of the literature of the day, that the very best thing is to be scientific, by all means literary. While the Bible inculcates early instruction with discipline, it seeks to make men feel that to know God and the way of peace with him, are the first things to be understood. Having learned these, we are taught that there are to be no bounds to our knowledge. But the Bible is not a book of science; yet science is of practical use. Had the Romans, for example, understood the scientific truth that water in pipes under or above ground conveyed even to great distances, will rise as high as its source, it would have been of immense practical use; for the knowledge that water in a pipe could after going down into a valley, come up of itself, would have saved untold wealth besides labor.

None of these things, however, were subjects of divine revelation; yet none but the wisdom which is infinite would have omitted them in its disclosures; for had men been allowed to dictate

a divine revelation, undoubtedly we should have had at the very beginning an encyclopedia of useful knowledge.

The history of such a people as the Jews, we imagine, would have been disposed of in a brief space, with all the lessons which it teaches concerning the character of God and our duty toward him. Such an age and people as that of the Greeks at their highest advancement, would no doubt have been celebrated in revelations, yet the Bible speaks of them disparagingly in comparison with that which it declares to be its great theme. "The Greeks seek after wisdom;" — more than intimating that the wisdom which distinguished Greece was not the principal thing. There was something which Greece never found, greater than all its lost arts.

Seeing the disproportioned value which men place on human learning, we can easily think what stimulus would have been given to curiosity, had the Most High set the example of elevating mere knowledge to the first place in our estimation. Wisely has our Divine instructor refrained from setting us such an example as to make his revelation a series of disclosures concerning mere scientific truth.

The Apostle Paul tells us that "whether there shall be prophecies they shall fail, whether there be tongues they shall cease, whether there be

knowledge it shall vanish away." For after we reach heaven, the humblest of our race who shall be saved, will in a brief period know more of the universe than the wisest of men here who know not God.

In a recent eulogy on Humbolt who, all agree had not a superior, if he had an equal, in scientific knowledge, the author, a great naturalist, discussed the question whether he was an Atheist. He had found a sentence in his voluminous works which contains a mention of God as Creator. Think of this, fellow men! The greatest of your race in mere scientific knowledge in modern times, the most adventurous explorer among the works of God, instead of overflowing with adoring tributes of love to Him, makes it necessary for his eulogist to search his books in order to find whether he did really believe in God. If he did not, the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he, for the Bible tells us in the passage just quoted about prophecies and tongues and knowledge, that all distinctions of knowledge in this world will vanish away.

The light of heaven will make our present inquiries with their most brilliant results pale by the noon-day brightness then to flood them. There the man who did nothing but study nature, neglecting that truth, "he that loveth

knoweth God," will be left to confusion, when some of the weakest men shall come to know by intuition all which the other had arrived at after years of toil. If there is one of our race who will be most pitiable hereafter, it will not be so much the rich fool who said to himself, "Thou hast much goods laid up for many years," as the great scholar, who had he been a worshipper of God with faith in his Son, our Saviour, would have been greatly prepared by his earthly studies for immediate advancement in knowledge concerning the works of God. Having only sought and found the knowledge of material things he will see hereafter that those who worshipped God in Christ are at once abreast of him in such knowledge; that then and ever after they are to be his superiors, while he must be consigned to darkness with his misused powers.

While the Bible is in effect the most literary of all books, has given existence to more volumes than any other stimulant of thought, more of the master pieces of painting, for example, being suggested by it, than by any other, so that the human mind has been in a larger measure cultivated by works of imagination drawn from it than from any other source, — still the Book of God was not written for that as its avowed purpose, but is continually admonishing us that to know God, to love, obey and enjoy Him is bet-

ter than the knowledge of material things. We learn this from the remarkable silence of the Bible as to scientific subjects, particularly from the wonderful conciseness in its information about the stars, saying only that God made two great lights; "the stars also."

Let any one ask himself whether we do not find in this reserve, a proof of a superior hand. This is not the manner of man. Human wisdom does not refuse to teach the things which men are most curious to know. It does not set science by lightly, when it seeks to instruct men in things pertaining to God. Therefore, if we believe this book to have been given by inspiration of God, we shall do well to follow the instruction afforded by its example of preferring the knowledge of God, especially to know his will, above every thing which science or literature can impart. While the desire for divine knowledge is not inconsistent with personal improvement, there are occasions, questions, which give opportunity to show that we are to consider this to be "Life eternal, to know Him, the true God, and Jesus Christ whom he has sent."

Having considered that the brief way in which astronomy is treated in the Bible is a proof of its divine inspiration, we shall admit that

II. WHILE GOD SAYS SO LITTLE ABOUT

THE STARS, IT IS WONDERFUL THAT HE HAS SAID SO MUCH ABOUT MAN AND HUMAN AFFAIRS.

One would think on reading the Bible only, that there is no other world than this under the care of the Almighty.

While we can never cease to blame the persecutors of Galileo for not consenting to look through his telescope, we can account for the incredulity of many who would not believe his doctrine, from the fear which they probably had of losing their belief in the exclusive regard which the Most High seems in the Bible to feel for our earth.

It was a satisfaction to think that this earth was the sole object of Jehovah's care as an inhabited sphere. The Bible, they thought, taught them so; it would be a loss to their sense of importance, if Galileo could prove that there were other worlds; for if like this in other respects, why might they not prove to be inhabited; and if inhabited, what becomes of our Bible? for the Bible made them feel that there could be no other world than this; else how could the Almighty seem to bestow upon men such minute regard?

Whatever may be our speculations on this topic, no one can read the Bible and not be filled

with amazement if he suffers himself to dwell upon the minute regard which God shows for individual men and human affairs. Some illustrations will make this appear.

There are places in the sacred history which, no doubt, try the faith of every one who believes in God. I will refer to a passage in Exodus for an example. The God of the universe giving directions for making the tabernacle in the wilderness, is so minute as to describe how the candlestick should be shaped, then ornamented. Not only so, he even speaks of the tongs; then of the snuff-dishes. He who made the orbit of Jupiter to be two hundred and seventy thousand miles, who had ordained Saturn to wander twenty-nine of our years before completing one revolution, the comet of 1843 to move at the rate of a million three hundred thousand miles in an hour, wrote in His book how the pins of the tabernacle should be fixed, what the loops, tassels, fringes should be, how much carved work should adorn the furniture. When we come to the sacrifices, there is anatomical minuteness: mention is made of clean and unclean creatures as discriminately as would be done by a naturalist. The exact measures of flour and oil are given; parts of the animal are specified for use or to be rejected.

It seems strange to notice the frequent use of

the expression in speaking of bullocks, rams, and kids, "a sweet-smelling savor unto the Lord." Can this be He who made "the stars also?" Will He designate the color of the skins to be used for the roof of the tabernacle in the wilderness? And when He legislates, will He do anything more than ordain a nation, then leave it to rulers how to frame enactments?

We have a remarkable case in point. The daughters of Zelophehad came to Moses representing that their father did not die in Korah's rebellion, but for his own sin; therefore they petitioned that the right of inheritence might be restored to them. What did Moses answer? He told them to wait till he had referred the matter to the Almighty. Having laid the case before God, he received from Him an enactment that the females of a family might in certain cases inherit!

While God was ruling among those orbs which led Job to exclaim, "Is there any number of His armies? and on whom doth not His light arise," He bestowed as particular attention to the *jurisprudence* relating to family inheritances among this migratory people, as though they had been a constellation, or zone of the heavens.

We are led to question whether the people of Galileo's time read their Bibles in a way to show that they were more noble than those of Thessa-

lonica in searching the Scriptures ; for they could not have considered such revelations of the minute attention of the Infinite God to individuals, yet hesitate to look through a telescope from fear of seeing more worlds than they could believe that the Almighty was able to comprehend in his regard. The New Testament takes up the subject. If five sparrows were sold for two farthings in the Saviour's time, and not one of them was forgotten before God, all questions as to the doctrine of a particular providence, we would suppose, should cease in every mind which is willing to accept the God of the Bible. The smallest occasion may be great. A spider stretched his web across the entrance of the cave where Mahomet had secreted himself. The men in pursuit of him said : " He cannot have entered here ; for he would have brushed away the web on going in : there has not been time, since we knew he was on the road, for the spider to have done his work." They, therefore, passed on. Hence, Mohammedanism.

We live under the government of a Being who, while He guides a comet in a sphere which a radius of hundreds of thousands of miles must be taken to describe, legislates about birds' nests ; rules in the armies of heaven, yet understands your thoughts afar off. " Behold ! God is great, and we know Him not : neither can the number

of His years be searched out. For He maketh small the drops of water which the clouds do drop and distil upon man abundantly." "Also, can any understand the balancing of the clouds, — the wondrous work of Him who is perfect in knowledge?"

There cannot be greater happiness (we might infer from the light of nature, without the aid of personal experience) than to be on terms of personal friendship with the Being who is at the same time swaying his sceptre over the universe, yet a sparrow cannot fall to the ground without Him. If God has kindled in our hearts love to them, He has done for us a greater act than for the heavenly bodies, none of which can hold communion with Him. It is better to be a Christian, though ignorant, than an undevout astronomer, though in possession of every secret in nature. God cares as little for the man who has mere knowledge, as we care for the ant whose hill of sand we perceive to be larger than that of his fellows. "Behold, He put no trust in His servants, and His angels He charged with folly." Knowledge involves no exercise of the will. The human will is the seat of free agency, therefore, of moral character. One who has exercised his will in owning allegiance to God has done that, though, in his knowledge, he be the least of all, which the man who is familiar with

the laws of the heavenly bodies, but does not spiritually know God, has failed to do. If God charges His angels with folly, He cannot respect a man, whose wisdom a child or a fool can baffle by simple questions. When men die who were eminent only for learning, eloquence, statesmanship, what value is placed on their learning, their eloquence, their statesmanship, among celestial inhabitants? These things, which may have made them conspicuous here, in another world are like street-lamps left burning after sunrise. The humblest of the heavenly inhabitants could make an unregenerate man feel that, being ignorant of spiritual things, he knows nothing. Had he known God, his eminent intellectual powers, of course, might have helped him greatly in his heavenly career.

To many of earth's wise men it must be said, hereafter, of the first principles of spiritual knowledge: "Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things?" Let the young, who are ambitious of literary distinction, let all who are leaders among men in worldly knowledge,—remember that, to know God in the Scriptural sense of that expression, is the greatest attainment. We cannot know God but by loving Him,—which we may do by accepting Christ as our Redeemer. And he that loveth knoweth God; for God is Love!

Again: "He that loveth is born of God." Let any one consider what it must be to come into that relation with this Infinite Being which a child has to its father. Such a relation we have, when we begin to love God, and not before. One might appear before him with an exact description of the heavenly bodies; but God could open before his eyes in a moment one of those nebulæ which now puzzle the wisest astronomer, — thereby making his knowledge fade before that superior light. There is no exhortation, therefore, more important than the one which Joshua gave Israel at the close of his life, — an exhortation worthy of the man who had been the conqueror of Canaan; an exhortation which even so great a warrior was not ashamed to make; an exhortation never made by Napoleon, nor by a modern Field-Marshal to their troops: "Take good heed to yourselves that ye love the Lord your God."

Think of Him who made the stars, causing to be prepared two tables of stone; those fingers whose work the heavens had been, making Hebrew letters, so becoming penman for the children of men. In which do we see most to adore? That He made the planet Jupiter with his moons, together with Saturn and his belt, shining on the hill tops, into the valleys of the wilderness of Sinai; or, that He who made Jupiter and Saturn

caused those tablets to be made, wrote the characters of a human alphabet with the same hand which drew the orbits for the comets, made laws for the heavenly bodies, ages before Kepler was born or man arose from the dust ; and when man had ruined himself by sin, wrote on stone for men to read, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me ? "

One thing is a climax to all which has been said, being at once proved by it and proving it. Need I say it is the work of Redemption by Christ? Perhaps it has seemed to some too much to believe that God could condescend to this little earth, become flesh, and as God-man be a sacrifice for sins. But is there anything more condescending in Redemption than we find in the books of Exodus, Numbers, Leviticus, and Deuteronomy? If I can believe that the same God who made the stars made the laws, especially the regulations in Leviticus, I can believe whatever the Bible may declare ; and can believe it without demanding explanations ; I can accept any declaration concerning it, made by the condescending God.

It was God manifest in the flesh who washed the feet of Simon Peter and Judas Iscariot. He who hung on the cross made the stars also ; "all things were created by him and for him ; without him was not anything made that was made."

Whoever lives and dies insensible to all this, will have for his chief reflection hereafter, that the God who made the stars made him and redeemed him by giving Christ to die for him; and all in vain.

It should be to us a source of the richest pleasure in this world to believe. At every experience of God's goodness to us we may say, "He made the stars also;" thus deepening our sense of his marvelous loving-kindness. It will seem to ennoble the future greatness of redemption in each particular case for an angel in contemplating it to say, "He made the stars also." It will be a joy to have walked by faith in this world with such a Bible; we thus accomplishing, each of us, the great purpose of our redemption, which is, to believe. Or, must we have every thing explained? Do we require the God who made the constellations to help us understand every thing before we receive it? Except we see in the Saviour's hand the print of the nails, and put our finger in the print of the nails, and thrust our hand into his side, will we refuse to believe?

Simply refusing to believe God in the wilderness, postponed the entrance of Israel into Caanan one generation, till the unbelievers had all perished. Inspiration speaks of them as carcasses; "Whose carcasses fell in the wilderness."

Unbelief is the great human sin. It will cost more people the loss of heaven than any other one thing. Christ himself is set to be with every man a corner stone, or a stone of stumbling. We should never ask, Do you believe our heavenly Father would do thus and thus? but we should ask, Has He done it? Does the Bible declare it? Then implicitly believe, nor make your intellectual apprehensions nor your moral sentiments the rule for the divine proceedings.

When a discoverer or thinker embraces a theory which conflicts with revelation, we should class it at once with "science, falsely so called." We are prone to exalt our wisdom above inspiration. If men would remember of how little importance they are in themselves, and that it is infinite condescension in God to ask for their love; if they would ponder that question of the inspired words, "Is it gain to the Almighty that thou makest thy way perfect? will he reprove thee for fear of thee? will he enter with thee into judgment," the exhortations of the Gospel would not make us think, as perhaps they do, that God solicits our love for benefit to himself.

He who made the stars also, made us, a little lower than the angels, and crowned us with glory and honor. This God, the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, made us and redeemed us by the sacrifice of the Son in the flesh. He offers

to sanctify our natures by the Holy Ghost, the third person of this adorable Trinity. Will any one of us fail of so great salvation? "Wherefore, as the Holy Ghost saith, To day, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts."

VIII.

EMULATION IN HEAVEN AMONG THE REDEEMED.

"This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief." — 1 Timothy 1: 15.

If there is anything like emulation among the redeemed in heaven, we may suppose that it is of a kind unknown on earth. It was written long ago by a good man, that if certain men should enter heaven as they now are, their great surprise would be not to find angels laying schemes to make themselves archangels. Perhaps these words of Paul in the text, express the chief subject of emulation among the redeemed, "sinners, — of whom I am chief." With them it may be, that emulation consists in harmonious strife to settle among themselves who of them were chief sinners, and are now chief debtors to the grace of God.

It would not be easy for any of us to conceive

of such emulation, unless we have already come to the deliberate opinion, that anything which we can experience short of hell is to us mercy.

Who will probably seem in heaven to have the highest claim as the chief of sinners, to be greatest debtors to infinite grace?

Let us suppose the inhabitants of heaven from among men engaged in this rivalry, pleading each his claim of owing most to divine mercy. We will judge between them in this harmonious strife.

I. THE APOSTLE PAUL FIRST BRINGS FORWARD HIS CLAIM.

“I persecuted the Church of God. That infant church, the fruit of a Saviour’s tears and blood was my prey. I hated it with implacable hatred. I went into houses and dragged Christians to prison. Neither age nor sex found mercy at my hands.

“Being exceedingly mad against them I compelled some of them to blaspheme. I saw their agony with heartfelt satisfaction. Around you in the heavenly company are the witnesses of my crimes. Behold the spirits of those whom I persecuted even to death. They came out of great tribulation, inflicted on them by me.

“The most affecting thing in my heavenly his-

tory, was my first interview with the martyr Stephen. When I saw him last on earth, he was kneeling to receive the stones from the murderers hands, and I was consenting unto his death, and kept the raiment of them that slew him. I did it not from love of pain and blood, but as a religious duty. Little did I ever think of meeting him in heaven ; but his must have been the greater surprise to meet me here, though with his last breath he prayed for me : ‘ Lord, lay not this sin to their charge.’ His blood infuriated me with more zeal for Christian blood.

“ On my way to Damascus with full authority to bind, imprison and kill every Christian, He who loved me and gave himself for me, appeared and spake to me, and in a tone of mingled remonstrance and pity, said, ‘ Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me ?’ When he might have consumed me with his lightnings, he spoke to me with gentle upbraiding. He could have suffered me to go on and fill up the measure of my iniquity, and be the most guilty spirit in hell ; instead of which he has made me, as you will all acknowledge, chief debtor to his love.

“ In contrast with my former life of blood, see what he permitted me to do. When it pleased God who separated me from my birth, to reveal his Son in me, forthwith I became a preacher

and an Apostle to the Gentiles. I preached to the nations who had never known Him, the unsearchable riches of Christ. I was permitted to write a large part of the New Testament to be the guide of thousands of generations to heaven. I was permitted for Christ's sake to be in dangers more abundant than all my companions, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft.

"I appeal to what I once was, and what I was permitted to do; to what I was by the grace of God, and to my present bliss in looking upon millions who by my influence were brought to heaven, if I was not in the first place the chief of sinners; if I am not now the greatest debtor to the grace of God."

II. Our attention is now demanded by a small company of men who cannot admit the claims of their beloved brother Paul, to be a greater sinner and a greater debtor to mercy than they. They are **THE CRUCIFIERS OF CHRIST**, whom we will suppose to have been converted at the day of Pentecost.

"Is it possible," they say, "that blood can fall with so deep a stain on a murderer's hand as the blood of the Son of God?" "With my hands," says one of them, "the crown of thorns

was forced upon his head." "But I bound his hands," says another. "I scourged him," says another. "I drove the nails into his hands and feet." "I am the Centurion who thrust the spear into his side." "It is a great crime to have been the means of death to a good man; but to have killed the Prince of Life, to have been the betrayers and murderers of the Son of God, is the chief transgression. Better to have been the murderers of the universal Church than to have platted a thorn of the Saviour's crown, to have driven one nail into that mysterious flesh of the God-man. Why did not the graves release their dead and swallow us up? Why did not the rocks of Calvary crush our bodies, and the darkness of the ninth hour leave us in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day?

"Instead of this, the Saviour sent his Apostles first of all to us;—'beginning at Jerusalem,' he said, 'with offers of pardon through my blood.' On us was the first descent of the Holy Spirit, at Pentecost; we were the early fruits of the harvest from that corn of wheat which on Calvary fell into the ground and died.

"If any guilt surpasses ours, declare it; mention one thing which surpasses this: 'and killed the Prince of Life.' Tell us, if you can, who owes more to divine forbearance than we. The

guilt of the Apostle Paul,—it sinks into insignificance by the side of ours. Never did he know such sensations, not even in his meeting with the martyr Stephen, as we had, when we first looked upon the face of our Redeemer in heaven. ‘When we last saw thee,’ we said, ‘we were nailing thee to the accursed tree;’ but ere we could repeat our thanks for pardon, we were filled with full assurance of his love. We walk these golden streets, we range these heavenly fields, and talk of Calvary with feelings unknown to all the heavenly host. If any are to be recognized here as chief sinners on earth and chief debtors to the grace of God, they must be The crucifiers of Christ.”

III. “Give room,” says a company of shining ones, whom we recognize as A BAND OF ONCE HEATHEN CHIEFS AND WARRIORS.

“We shall conclude this contest by our rehearsal. We were the Gentiles that knew not God. We worshipped the devil, and faithful subjects we were to our lord. No souls went lower than we in degradation; no vices, no crimes were too abominable for us. Some of us were worshipped as gods; on our altars human victims bled and burned. Tribes fell by tribes into our hands, and we were following them down to darkness and the pit. The Son of God sent

missionaries to our islands; they told us about the true God; of the Sacrifice for our sins; of pardon, regeneration, holiness, heaven. Then we were washed, justified, sanctified, by the renewing of the Holy Ghost. God never found souls lower in guilt than we; of course, none were ever raised so far by divine grace.

“Here is the martyr of Raratonga, whom we slew, the missionary John Williams; but instead of Christians sending fleets to destroy us, the children of Great Britain sent a missionary packet to our shores and her name was, ‘John Williams;’ as though they would heap coals of fire on our heads; and the children of America sent the Morning Star with Bibles, to which they told us we should do well to take heed until the day dawned, and the day-star should arise in our hearts. In all this we saw the hand, we felt the heart, of God; this was the Gospel of peace; it melted our hearts; we were led captive by mercy. We almost question the claim of angels to the highest tokens of the love of God. At least we can say, if they are the height, we are the depth, of the love of God; and it was more for that love to reach down to us than up to them.

“What unmerited love, to find us out in our islands, and bring salvation to us! True, we can speak of no striking exhibition of God’s power

that is uncommon, in the conversion of sinners, like that which Paul experienced, and our brethren at Pentecost. But we were the lost sheep in the wilderness of ocean : the Good Shepherd found us, and brought us home to His fold. We cannot yield to any who have yet spoken, in our conviction that we were the greatest sinners, because our guilt was sickening : we were more than brutal ; we had the instincts of brutes, and the passions of animals. Hideous, loathsome, fiendish, as we were, we are now companions with the saints in light. If the contrast of the heavenly with the earthly condition may enter into the account, whose robes seem to them so resplendent as ours ? And if distance from God enhances the love which brings back the lost, give us the joy of confessing that we are debtors to His mercy more than you all."

IV. Before the eyes of the assembled multitude appears a company who represent THE CHILDREN OF HEAVEN. Peculiar beauty dwells in their faces and forms ; immortal youth breathes from their looks and motions. The attention of the multitude is chained while they thus proceed : —

" We represent the innumerable host of spirits who came to heaven in infancy ; we are from every tribe under heaven. There was not one

of all the tribes of men who did not send some infants to heaven. Some of us were murdered by our parents as soon as we were born. Each heathen river, each island shore, is the burying-place of our bodies. Among us is the company of those who were slain by Herod, — martyrs for the Child Jesus, — and those who have perished by the wars, famines, and diseases which have swept the earth. With us are the children of Christian families, baptized in Christian temples or homes, buried amid broken hearts, but waiting with surprising beauty and glory to welcome pious parents hither. Do you speak of the grace of God? If grace consists in the absence of all merit, who are debtors at all to divine grace compared with us? We did not even believe on Christ, — for we never knew him; but, being involved in the first father's transgression, without opportunity of repentance and faith in the Saviour, we were included in the free gift: salvation was bestowed on us, who never sought it. Consider, too, the goodness of God, in our early death. If those of us who were born in heathenism had lived to manhood, we should have perished in our sins; but God removed us from such exposure, to heaven. Some of us, though born in Christian lands, were the children of irreligious parents, whose example and influences, if we had lived, might have prevented

our salvation. Look at some of our homes, — our parents and all our brothers and sisters unconverted! See what peril we have escaped, by the merciful hand of death! God in His goodness interposed to save us. He has made our death, in many instances, the means of the conversion of parents. Such joy as we behold in the recognition of a glorified child by the parents as they enter heaven, we cannot utter: angels cannot witness it without emotion. We have seen fathers and mothers meeting the children who died in infancy, and left their parents without hope; and God sanctified the affliction, and the parents ascribe their salvation and eternal union with their children in heaven, to the removal of the children by an early death. Those of us whose parents lived and died impenitent, and are lost, though the first budding instinct of filial affection remained in our hearts, and made us hope to meet our parents here, nevertheless, are made to see what a mercy it is that God snatched us away from an irreligious, prayerless influence, and saved us. Why did He not leave us to perish with our parents? Because He set His love upon us, therefore did He deliver us; and our rescue from such imminent danger and the peculiar love of God in our early death bids us not to weep for those who would have destroyed us by their influence, if God had not

interposed to save us. God and heaven are our father and mother, sister and brother. ‘O Death! where is thy sting?’ The monster Death was the means of our salvation. ‘O grave! where is thy victory?’ Our graves received our bodies each for safe-keeping against the resurrection of the just, and the strange union of soul and body, of which we have no remembrance, and can form no conception, is to be ours, with sensations of pleasure unknown to the rest of the rising dead. Though every saint will have immortal youth, our youth will have in it something peculiar; for the only homes, the only scenes of childhood, which we can remember, are are those of heaven. We were children in heaven; and through eternity the vivid recollections of the first impressions made upon our opening minds by the scenes of heaven will make our whole being an eternal morning. We were never conscious of sinning against God. Had we lived, we should have had consciousness of sin. We never rejected the Saviour, or crucified Him afresh, or grieved the Holy Spirit of God; and it is the subject of our grateful praise, that by death God prevented us from so doing, and, instead of letting us spend years in sin, gave us those years in the purity of heaven. Adore with us that grace which selected us from a ruined world, and saved us of its own accord,

when we were unconscious of it. You all seem to have had grace bestowed on you; but we are, as it were, grace itself. Boasting is, indeed, excluded from any share in our salvation. Grace, grace in us is all in all."

V. There follows these words, from the army of children in heaven, — a deep, rich song, its joy mingled with pensive strains, from a host whose feelings burst forth in notes of praise whenever the grace of God is mentioned in their hearing. They are THE CONVERTS OF CHRISTIAN CONGREGATIONS. Most of them declare that their Christian privileges and their long resistance of God's call and His forbearance with them under their great guilt, make them the chief debtors to divine grace. "What is the guilt of Paul," they say, "who did not sin under the clear strivings of the Divine Spirit, but ignorantly, in unbelief? What is the guilt of the crucifiers of Christ, and of barbarians, who did not enjoy the teachings of that Spirit? What are the obligations of the children, compared with ours, when you think that we were saved, not only without merit, but against infinite demerit? Was not blasphemy against the Holy Ghost the unpardonable sin? Does it not follow that any sins against the Holy Spirit are greater than others, — because, to sin against

right and conviction constitutes the most inexcusable sin? We had the whole Bible from childhood, and Sabbaths and sanctuaries, and with us the Holy Spirit early began to strive. But for a long time we grieved him every day. We despised his warnings, turned away from the Gospel, walked after our own hearts: one year after another ended, and left us without God. With a full impression of what we ought to do, we refused to do it. Should not the servant who knew his Lord's will, and did it not, be beaten with many stripes? Who of all this heavenly company, professing to have been the chief of sinners, knew their Lord's will so well as we? Think of us as members of Bible-classes, studying the Word of God, knowing it by heart, hearing earnest, affectionate appeals from our teachers and companions, — yet resisting all.

“In yonder world of punishment, there are none who suffer so much from conscience as those who died under the preaching of the Gospel, and now remember the awakenings, the convictions, the sermons, the solemn scenes of religious interest, — the times when they were ‘almost persuaded.’ Souls who went from the sight of the Lord's table to lie down in sorrow, have no keener anguish than when they recall that table as it stood in the house of God, — its white

cloth, its silver flagon and cup, the bread ready to be broken, the looks and words of the pastor, repeating the invitation of Jesus, ‘This do in remembrance of me;’ and then the dividing assembly, — such an emblem of the separations at the last day! Now, had we, with all our cultivation of minds, our enlightened consciences our memories stored with Scripture and hymns — had we perished, you all admit that no souls in hell would be so tormented as we. For us to have lost heaven and to have spent eternity with the wicked, would have been the severest suffering which God can inflict. Some who worshipped with us, and sang out of the same book now suffer it. How near we came to the brink of ruin! Our feet had well-nigh slipped. The centuries of our heavenly life have not abated our astonishment at being saved. We find ourselves, often repeating that inspired description of ourselves, — ‘For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another.’ It is our deliberate opinion that the greatest sinners and the greatest debtors to the grace of God are to be found among members of Christian Congregations.”

The controversy might be prolonged; it doubtless is. May we hear it forever!

If asked now what our judgment is, in view of this friendly contest in heaven for the chief place as debtor to the grace of God, could we hesitate for a reply? When we think of the criminality of rejecting, of simply neglecting Jesus Christ, under all the influences of education, of Christian example, of persuasion, of providence, of death, of conscience enlightened by the Bible and illuminated by the suggestions of the sanctuary, beginning with childhood, extending through mature years, and in some cases to old age, of living under the persuasive influences of the Christian religion; sacraments, providences, the Holy Spirit, prayer, special blessings; the rich gifts of an all-bounteous loving kindness and tender mercy; and then when we consider what we should have suffered had we perished under these influences, what our reflections would have been, what an eternity, ours, with all our knowledge, opportunities,—and heaven lost! forever lost! Tell us, ye who fell from heaven, would not our loss of heaven have been greater to us than it would have been to any others of the children of men?

This question, my hearers, may none of us have occasion to ponder when it is forever too late for the consideration of it to be of any avail.

Some of the most amiable of this congregation in the esteem of their fellow men, might be told

by their Judge, "It shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgment than for you." None have more occasion than you who have enjoyed the privileges of the sanctuary to say, "How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation!" Let me then strive to impress these few truths upon you by the help of this subject.

I. *Of all the titles of Christ this holds the chief place, Saviour of Sinners.*

The Apostle Paul tells us, assuredly true and worthy of the fullest acceptance is this, that "Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners."

The full acceptance of this truth will put an end to the idea, that Christ's mission was one of philanthropy; that he was a great reformer; that human salvation is merely development.

He came into the world to save sinners. Every thing else, civilization, science, culture, arts, social human happiness, is each a fruit of redemption and of pardon. Other blessings are merely the things, which Robert Hall says, "Christianity scatters about her profusely on her sublime march to immortality."

But the great work of Christ is to save sinners. If you are a sinner, you are an object of redeeming grace; if you are not a sinner in need

of an infinite atonement, you may, indeed, gather many of the scattered blessings of Christianity ; but you will at the most, only eat of the crumbs which fall from the Master's table.

But believe and feel yourself to be, in view of your privileges, one of the chief debtors to the grace of God, and you will be a rival with Paul for the distinction. There probably is not a better unconverted man among us, than the young man at the feet of Gamaliel. Many a virtuous man, many an estimable woman, has feelings towards evangelical religion which compare well with those which Saul of Tarsus had towards Stephen. They would be willing to keep the raiment of those who would stone it.

It is to be doubted if Saul was more conscientious than some people among us are, in their strong dislike of the doctrines of the cross. "And such were some of you, but ye are washed ;" and have taken place with the claimants for the largest indebtedness to divine grace.

It is plain from what has been said,

Secondly, that *nothing on earth is more unlike the spirit of heaven than a self-justifying spirit.*

Some of our friends say, "I am no worse than others ; I shall fare as well as others ; I have suffered enough here without suffering hereaf-

ter ; God will not punish me for a few sins ; I am less guilty than some who profess more than I."

If this be our spirit we may be sure that we have no inheritance with the company of heaven. The spirit of heaven is a humble self-condemning spirit. The language of heaven is, "Unto him that loved us and washed us from our sins in his blood."

It appears from our subject,

Thirdly, *The greatness of guilt may be a ground of hope rather than of despair.*

Some of the greatest sinners on earth will be in heaven ; indeed we may say that if there be one whose guilt we are ready to feel, is unparalleled, we may have hope that heaven will contain him when they bring the glory and honor of the nations into it ; the greatest glory and honor will be penitent thieves, the woman who was a sinner, and Saul of Tarsus.

Has any one here been a great transgressor ? Will you have uncommon happiness in heaven ? Will you be a conspicuous monument of the grace of God ? To find great sinners, those whom God adjudges to be such, we would not probably be sent to the haunts of vice, to the ignorant, the neglected, or even the abandoned ;

but perhaps to the house of God where some, exalted to heaven in their opportunities of knowing God and their duty, are in their hearts without God. They probably would have more to reflect upon if lost, than any ; and, if saved, will not admit that any deserved it less than they.

There are among us those who are ready to dispute with Paul his claim to be the chief debtor to the grace of God. Should opportunity be given, some would humbly but earnestly declare that they would not admit that there is a soul on earth or in heaven who has greater reason than they to adore the grace of God, or one who owed more to divine forbearance, long-suffering, gentleness and compassion.

We are each destined to spend eternity in reviewing life ; and unquestionably the most absorbing object of our thoughts will be Jesus Christ : and the theme on which we shall chiefly dwell will be that "Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners." But it may prove to be the case that some one of us will have occasion to say, No one has lost more in losing heaven than I ; no one lost it for less than I ; so that of all who have occasion to weep and wail, I am chief.

No doubt every one of you will have occasion in heaven or hell either to claim that he is chief debtor to the grace of God, or that he is of all men most miserable.

You will say, Who had more to enlighten, restrain, subdue, in parentage, religious instructions, warnings, escapes from destruction, recoveries from sickness, the death of companions, awakenings, forgivenesses, answers to prayer when on the brink of destruction. "As for me, my feet were almost gone, my steps had well nigh slipped." Many and many a time there was but a step between me and death. How I abused the mercy of God, how defiant I was to his threatenings, how insensible to sparing mercy; I feel willing to contest with any sinner from earth his claim as owing most to the grace of God. I would demand of him to prove, if he could, that there was more long-suffering, gentleness, undeserved mercy in his case than mine.

Others may be heard to say, Come and see if there be any sorrow, like unto my sorrow. To whom of you, companions in misery, is heaven more of a loss than to me? Who of you came nearer to being saved. Who had more done to save him? Who gave up heaven for less than I? To whom is the company of the lost more distressing than to me? Is there any sorrow like unto my sorrow?

And so forever and ever, succeeding ages will but repeat our assertion, that no one owes more than each of us to the grace which bringeth salvation; or has more occasion to lift up his voice

in loudest lamentations. And all this in consequence of one act of accepting or neglecting the great salvation. One single submission to the call of God, or one refusal to accept his offers, will be the decisive act which will determine whether we spend eternity claiming to be chief debtor to the grace of God, or chief debtor to His avenging law and neglected gospel. It is indeed a solemn thing to die, but is it not a more solemn thing to live under such liabilities? I would not close my eyes in sleep till I had committed my soul to those hands which on the cross had on one side the impenitent thief and on the other the penitent thief, Jesus in the midst, proclaiming as it does to all men their danger and their only refuge. Some stand on slippery places. "Their feet shall slide in due time." No one has listened to the voice of mercy but will see the time when he will say as Bradford the martyr once did when he looked on a felon going to execution, "There, but for the grace of God goes John Bradford;" or who would not be willing to exchange his conscience for that of the felon; supposing, in the greatest of his agony, that any and every burden must be lighter than his.

Therefore, "Escape for thy life; neither stay thou in all the plain, escape to the mountain, lest thou be consumed." Come, take up this moment

the endless song of praise to divine grace ! Enter the lists of competitors for the chief crown which shall be cast at the feet of your Redeemer !

“ We, then, as workers together with Him, beseech you that ye receive not the grace of God in vain. For He saith, I have heard thee in an accepted time and in the day of salvation have I succored thee ; behold, now is the accepted time, behold now is the day of salvation.”

IX.

THE COUNSEL OF ELIHU TO THE DESPONDENT.

"Although thou sayest thou shalt not see him, yet judgment is before him; therefore trust thou in him."—Job 35: 14.

THERE is no word which the worshippers of God need to have whispered to their hearts more frequently than this: "Trust thou in Him."

We are in a world and under a system of events wonderfully adapted to try our faith. We have reason to think that angels look with astonishment when they see one who is in great affliction trusting in God. Angels can trust in Him without effort. Indeed what would become of them at times when they see His great judgments, if they could not? They see more that calls for faith than we: for they not only witness, but are called to execute His dark designs. They never start back from fulfilling His com-

mands, saying, This is too dreadful. But let us hear what they say: "And the third angel poured out his vial upon the rivers and fountains of waters, and they became blood." "And I heard the angel of the waters say, Thou art righteous, O Lord, which art and wast and shalt be, because Thou hast judged thus." "And I heard another angel out of the altar say, Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are Thy judgments."

Seeing so many of the terrible acts of the Almighty, perhaps it is well for them that they are not required to walk by faith; so that without question they look on us under great bereavements in this dark world, and say, "What should we do if we had to suffer thus and knew no more than they?" So when they see one bereft of a child, for example, under circumstances peculiarly trying, perhaps following the loss of a companion, or of one child after another, till at length the last coal is quenched, no doubt they say, "Earth is indeed a spectacle to us angels."

While we wonder how angels endure such revelations as God makes to them, they wonder how Christians endure such mysterious chastisements. It is easy for angels to love God; they always did; there is nothing in His works and ways to baffle their trust, nothing in themselves to call in question His justice: to make them

doubt His goodness. So when they see us enduring sharp trials not only with long-suffering, but joyfully, they do not question the truth which they often hear from our pulpits, that there is more that is wonderful in the faith of some Christians than in the obedience of the angels. Our faith also fills them with astonishment because it is not universal among men. They see many nominal Christians who have very little ; some have none at all. I was once called to minister consolation to a mother who had lost a child under trying circumstances. She replied thus to my remarks : "I cannot see why God should afflict me so ; my sister has brought up a large family of children, nor lost one ; and here my only daughter who would have been such a comfort to me, is snatched away." Angels took no pleasure in her faith ; and now twenty-five years from that time she herself is wasting away, having no hope, and without God in the world. In contrast, they did take pleasure in a bereaved mother who anticipated all which I was ready to say to her, by exclaiming, "Can you tell me why this affliction makes me love God so ?" Said I, "perhaps you have learned to say with the Psalmist, ' Whom have I in heaven but thee ! and there is none on earth that I desire besides thee.' " — Consider

I. IF WITHOUT FAITH IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO

PLEASE GOD, WE MIGHT INFER THAT FAITH IS EMINENTLY PLEASING.

If faith, such as I have mentioned, makes angels wonder as they see it in the clouds and darkness under which we suffer, there can be no question that God himself is pleased with it. For you have time and again noticed in the New Testament, that Christ was more pleased with faith than anything else. Once he said, "O woman, great is thy faith, be it unto thee, even as thou wilt!" At another time, he turned from a suppliant and said to the people: "Verily, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel!"

There is in Scripture no list of those who distinguished themselves for zeal, or humility, or hope; but the eleventh of Hebrews emblazons the names of men and women who through faith did marvellous things. God made Abraham the heir of the greatest blessings for his faith. Faith is the crowning glory of the Christian character. Faith in Christ saves the soul. The trial of it is said to be much more precious than of gold that perisheth; it is to be found unto praise and honor, and glory, at the appearing of Jesus Christ.

Such being the distinguishing glory of trusting in God in this distant dark world, it so excites the wonder of angels, and commands the

approbation of God himself, we shall do well to make it our study to live a life of faith. Every one has abundant opportunity to practise it. Could the secrets of our hearts be unfolded, we should find that every one is ready to confess that he needs nothing so much as trust in God.

II. A PRINCIPAL DESIGN OF THE OLD TESTAMENT IS TO TEACH US FAITH.

We have before us in the book from which the text is taken, a wonderful illustration of our subject. The oldest of all writings is the book of Job. It is marvellous to see what the subject of it is; how God began to teach the children of men. Wise men among us would, perhaps, have prescribed that the oldest record in the Book of God should be a plain statement of truths relating to science, when and how the world was made; how many worlds were created at once; were they peopled? the number, character, employments of their inhabitants. Instead of these things, the subject chosen is a man reduced from affluence to abject poverty, loathsome disease, excruciating pain. The devil is allowed to experiment with him by bereaving him, by tormenting him, by setting against him all his friends, some of them good men. His wife conjures him to abandon his confidence in the Almighty: "curse God and die!"

The Scripture says: "Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord, how that the Lord is very pitiful and of tender mercy." We are bold to say, that God meant to teach mankind by the first writing which He has communicated to us, that the great business of man in this world is to trust God; that He does this by opening first before the eyes of men, not the book of Proverbs, not the book of Ecclesiastes, not the Psalms, not the story of creation, but the duty of implicit trust in God. As an example, He gives us a rich man, the greatest of all the men of the East, stripped at once of every thing, sitting down in the ashes, scraping himself with a piece of potsherd, yet giving the sacred historian occasion to say, "In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly."

There came three men to talk with him; they intended to teach him, as we all think that we know so well, perhaps, how to do when we see others in trouble. Among the wonders of inspiration I know of nothing more remarkable than this, (and it may be accounted one of the chief proofs of the inspiration of the Bible), that while these three friends of Job were wholly mistaken in their judgment of him, and said many things which were wholly wrong as applied to Job, so that God was angry with

them, yet not one word did they say which in its general application is not true. So that a minister can take a passage from any part of their speeches for a text and preach from it as the word of God.

The Homers and Miltons "pale their ineffectual fires" in comparison with this first poem, this master-piece of wisdom, ingenuity, wisdom, eloquence, religion; three men talking wrongfully, so that they moved the wrath of God against them; for He said to Eliphaz, seemingly the best of the three, "My wrath is kindled against thee and against thy two friends; for ye have not spoken of me the thing that is right as my servant Job hath;" yet neither of them saying one word which in itself and by itself, and with a right application, was unsuitable to be recorded in the Bible.

Let the students of language, proficient in logic, rhetoric, eloquence, come and see this great sight, and acknowledge that the Book of Job must have been inspired to have accomplished this unparalleled feat of wisdom; and if this one book is inspired, why not all the rest from the same hand, bearing the same seal of the apostles and of Christ?

Our text is both an example and illustration of what I have now said. No wonder that it made God angry to hear those good but mistaken

men say to Job, "Acquaint now thyself with Him and be at peace;" — a man who probably knew more of God than they. Yet that passage is a truthful, a beautiful word. So is the text. Very little did Job need such an exhortation; but we all need it, and by divine help we will profit by it.

III. THE COUNSEL OF ELIHU IN THE TEXT IS PROFITABLE TO A SINKING HEART.

"Although thou sayest thou shalt not see Him." If Job did not say this, perhaps we do; and we are grateful for this counsel. Job said, "He knoweth the way that I take; when He hath tried me I shall come forth as gold." The meaning of the text is, "Although you say you will never see Him appear for you, yet He will exercise judgment when to do so; therefore trust thou in Him."

There are times, we have all seen them, we may be seeing them now, when a dark providence has settled down like a cloud on our prospect. Something has happened which is the very worst thing which it seems to us God could have chosen wherewith to afflict us. There is no explanation; there is no mitigation, no cheerful outlook; all is dark, bewildering; the wisest thing which our best friends can do is to keep silence; they are mistaken if they tell us not to

weep ; only He who can touch the bier and raise the dead can properly say, "Weep not." "Jesus wept ;" it was a relief to Him ; it is to us. Nature finds comfort in cries, groans, tears ; but still we say, "All is in vain ;" and as Job said, "Though I speak, my grief is not assuaged ; and though I forbear, yet what am I eased ?" We say, "It is impossible not to weep ; shall the dead be raised ? can the past be recalled ; can the bitterness of this affliction be soon taken away ? Stern, inexorable providence has done what Job said God had done to him. 'He hath compassed my way with hewn stone ;' not with heaps of stones, but each one cut, 'taken out of wind,' mortised, set up with plumb and level, all designed, a perfect piece of work, built so as exactly to confound me. There is no use in argument ; all is hopeless ; God was my friend once ; now He has set me up as His mark. 'The arrows of the Almighty are within me, the poison whereof drinketh up my spirit.'"

To such afflicted souls the Word of God says, "Although thou sayest thou shalt not see Him, yet judgment is before Him." You think that you will never see His design to accomplish good in you and by you in this affliction. It seems to you without plan, confused, reckless. God seems to have let chaos overspread you ; infinite wisdom does not appear to have had any thing to do

with the events which have befallen you. To gather up the thread of your broken history hereafter, seems to you as impossible as it would to pick out your carriage-track from the multitude of tracks which fill the streets of a city. Even if it were not so, we learn from the inferior creatures that animal instinct is capable of scenting a track even more confused. You have seen an animal that has lost his master, finding his steps among ten thousand which have been imprinted there during that day, and finally tracing his way home for miles by that fine sense. How can one who knows this to be so, question the ability of Infinite Wisdom to keep the remembrance of all his affairs distinct?

This good man, Job, says, "Doth not He see my ways and count all my steps?" David makes this appeal to the all-knowing God: "Put thou my tears in Thy bottle; are they not in Thy book?" God keeps a record of every tear, when, why it was shed; David prays him to be still more observant of them;—"Put my tears into thy bottle," he says; catch every falling drop. O the infinite, yes, the infinite love of God for every child of His here appears. We speak of God as a father; He does more; He speaks of Himself as a mother. "As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you, and ye shall be comforted in Jerusalem." "Can

a woman forget?" says God; "yea they may forget; yet will I not forget thee." Judgment is before him as it is before the tenderest friend. God never forgets; never mistakes. He keeps the time-table of the comets; He knows when one planet is to cross another's track; He remembered Israel in Egypt; and in the last two verses of the second chapter of Exodus we read these remarkable words: "And God heard their groaning, and God remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob; and God looked upon the children of Israel, and God had respect unto them." Four times in those few lines is that adorable name repeated in connection with His remembrance of His afflicted people. Judgment is before Him, whenever a child of His suffers; the arrow that pierces us, wounds His heart ere it reaches ours.

IV. OUR DUTY IN DARK HOURS IS HERE MADE PLAIN.

"Therefore trust in Him." This is done by special heartfelt address to God by word of mouth. It is not enough to think a prayer, unless we are speechless by reason of sickness, then our thoughts are prayers. We cannot but think that when the Psalmist says, "My voice shalt thou hear in the morning, O Lord; in the morning will I di-

rect my prayer unto thee and will look up," he means to be understood literally; that he would not as a rule lie in bed and think a prayer to God. There is meaning in his resolution to let God hear his voice. Speaking requires an effort of mind which is not made when we lie still and muse, unless, as I said before, we are under some infirmity. To rise and go upon our knees, implies a serious determination to seek God, and the act of framing our speech, shows that we are in earnest. Cotton Mather says of Rev. N. Rogers of Ipswich, that every morning for many years, while in health, it was his custom on rising from his bed immediately to fall upon his knees. So that when we are in trouble it is a good thing for us to draw nigh to God with words. "Take with you words and turn unto the Lord; say unto him, Take away all iniquity, and heal us graciously; so will we render the calves of our lips." We do well if we remember this in our approach to God.

When David says, "Awake up, my glory," he means, 'my tongue, the glory of my frame.' An effort to speak is often a sure sign that our powers are summoned by us to a serious effort. The time, the place, the manner, the attitude of our approach to God are regarded by Him. There may be a serious deficiency in our habit of approach to God; a carelessness, a negli-

gence, which we would not be guilty of in our intercourse with one another. A solemn, deliberate expression of our trust in God is sure to be regarded by Him. "Trust in Him at all times; ye people, pour out your hearts before Him; God is a refuge for us." You may not be aware that your address to God has been heard; but David says, "I will direct my prayer unto thee and will look up," as one who shoots an arrow follows it with his eye to see how it speeds. Having committed our prayer to God, declaring our trust in Him, we must show our sincerity by a quietness of mind which, be it remembered, is not inconsistent with importunity. Yet we need not suspect ourselves of impatience if we find ourselves saying, "How long wilt thou forget me, O Lord, forever?" "Make no tarrying, O my God."

But there are some events in which we feel it proper to abstain from specific requests in prayer, as, in hopeless sickness, the recovery of aged persons whose restoration cannot be desired by themselves or their friends. Again, there are sorrows which neither earth nor time can heal. In such cases, "it is good that a man should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the Lord!" Eternity will witness great surprises. Some who never awaken any solicitude, no doubt will prove to have no oil in their vessels with their lamps when the Bridegroom comes.

It has fallen to my lot to meet with more than one case like this : A man has suddenly died who followed false doctrine, giving no sign of recantation. His young widow said, "His friends of course suppose that he failed to be saved. If so, let me perish with him." So she resolutely embraced his erroneous views, becoming more zealous than he in defending them. One day I startled her with this question : "What makes you feel so sure that your husband did not recant in his last hours? Perhaps he did, though for two days he could not speak to inform you of the change in his views. Suppose that when you die you should find that he is saved by accepting Christ in those last days, and that you, trying to follow his steps in unbelief, have missed him, and he is comforted and you are not. What a sad mistake you will make, to have persisted in following a mortal instead of listening to the suggestions of the Holy Spirit, urging you to Christ. Believe the Gospel ; then you will either find your companion in heaven, or have a satisfactory reason given you why he is not there. Do not conclude that your husband is not saved because you did not hear him make a confession of faith. It might have had a disastrous effect on survivors to know that he, after such a life, was saved in the last hour. Make your own calling sure." It was gratifying

to see her confess Christ, choosing rather to follow His plain instructions than the bewildering light which was leading her among tombstones, over graves.

It is wrong to assume that we are possessed of full knowledge concerning that which has taken place between the soul and God. His ways are not as our ways, neither His thoughts as our thoughts. Many times He shuts up a man and there is no opening, not a gleam of light; there is silence and he hears a voice, "Be still and know that I am God." All that one can do at such a time is to fulfil the ordinary duties of life, faithfully, patiently, bearing the grievous burden. Some people seem unwilling to forgive God, if He has done thus and thus: but who shall say to Him, "What doest thou?"

We should never abandon ourselves to inconsolable grief in the darkest hours. God takes pleasure in those who against hope, believe in hope, taking part with God by insisting that He is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think. While faith in Jesus Christ is the superior act of faith, it cannot be questioned that before Christ came, believing in God was imputed to Abraham for righteousness, and that God will justify many of the heathen through faith, whose knowledge of God does not reach beyond those invisible things of Him which are

clearly seen, being understood from the things which are made. "Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he had offered Isaac, his son, upon the altar?"

Thunder never strikes; it is only lightning that strikes. At the same time while thunder never strikes, the lightning which has no thunder is only heat-lightning. So repentance cannot save; faith only saves; yet faith without repentance is only heat-lightning. Repentance has no power to save; yet it is essential to faith. Thus, works have no saving power; yet faith without works is dead. So while faith in Jesus Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God unto salvation, and nothing can supplant it, Abraham's offering of Isaac on the altar showed a readiness to accept Christ; therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness, as it is written, "Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness." Therefore say, "Why art thou cast down, O my soul, and why art thou disquieted within me? Hope thou in God, for I shall yet praise Him who is the health of my countenance."

Did we but know it, God is wooing those whom He is afflicting. "He scourgeth every son whom He receiveth." Therefore be of good courage, desponding souls. Submit yourselves under His rod. If you are of a melancholy dis-

position, read in the epistle of James. "Paul and Peter require three or four verses to finish their salutations before they begin their doctrine; but James seems so full of something good to tell us that he cannot wait beyond one verse, but bursts forth with these words of cheer in his second verse: "My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations." If you are despondent, seek out the poor, many of whom are rich in faith, and talk with them. A good man who was melancholy, began in a gloomy tone to say to a colored woman, "Does it not seem strange to you that God should pass by the rich people who live in these mansions and come to your hovel to make you a Christian?" "No, sir, it is not strange," said she, "it is just like Him." The answer did more to cure his melancholy than did his books. So we say to you who are cast down: "Wait on the Lord." "Be of good courage, and He shall strengthen your heart, all ye that hope in the Lord."

I have asked you to consider

I. *If without faith it is impossible to please God, we may infer that faith is eminently pleasing to Him.*

II. *A principal design of the Old Testament is to teach us faith.*

III. *The Counsel of Elihu in the text is profitable to a sinking heart.*

IV. *Our duty in dark hours is here made plain.*

FINALLY. EVERYTHING WHICH HAS BEEN SAID OF TRUST IN GOD IN TIMES OF DESPONDENCY, IS EMINENTLY TRUE OF FAITH IN THE SAVIOUR.

It is one proof of His equality with God that Christ said, "Let not your heart be troubled; ye believe in God, believe also in me." An imposter might say this arrogantly; but none save a divine being could properly speak of himself in comparison with God. Despondency is never so much out of place as in coming to Christ. There it is sinful. God classes the fearful and unbelieving with all liars; and we know where they are to have their part. Afraid to trust yourself in those hands which were nailed to the cross for the sins of the whole world! The hands of Him who said, "All power is given unto Me in heaven and on earth?" "All that the Father hath given Me shall come to Me, and him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out?" if confidence, if boldness, is proper at any

time, and in any, it is eminently so in a guilty creature coming to the Saviour of sinners. Let a trembling soul hear these words: "Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace that we may obtain mercy." Paul says of Christ, "In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of Him." To the Hebrews who saw the High Priest going alone once a year into the Holy of holies, he says, "Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus—let us draw near." John uses this astonishing expression: "Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment."

Come then, one and all, and only believe. Believe and you shall be established. "He that believeth shall be saved." Begin with believing in Jesus Christ, the author and finisher of our faith. In every event of life, in trials, sorrows, losses, disappointments, remember this:

"With patience, then, the course of duty run:

"God never does, nor suffers to be done,

"But thou would'st do thyself could'st thou but see

"The end of all events as well as He."

"Blessed are they that have not seen and yet have believed." Happy is he here and hereafter,

who can say, not as an intellectual, philosophical truth, but with the heart, "Lord, I KNOW that Thy judgments are right." Verily it will be said of such as of Israel, "He led them forth by the RIGHT way."

X.

THOU ART THE GUIDE OF MY YOUTH.

“Wilt thou not from this time cry unto me, My father, thou art the guide of my youth?”—Jeremiah 3 : 4.

THERE is nothing more wonderful than prayer. One would think that every child might agree to this. If asked to prove it, he would need only to point to the text. God invites the youngest to pray to Him. There can be nothing more wonderful than this. It is indeed astonishing that God should listen to prayer; much more, that He should invite us to pray; but a child may well say, that for God to wonder at him for not praying, thus apparently deeming a child's prayer of sufficient importance to be inquired into if neglected, almost exceeds belief. One who admits this truth, that God really pays attention to prayer, not only inviting but exhorting to it, will be prepared to appreciate the remark of Daniel Webster to a kinsman who spent a night at his house at Marsh-

field, and related the conversation to me. He said "that of all the things which ever interested his mind this was chief: The personal relation of a soul to God." He explained, saying, that he perceived in the Scriptures that God recognized every man as accountable to Him for his conduct, even to his thoughts and words; that He took a personal interest in all that transpired within him, listening to his words of supplication, understanding his thoughts afar off, making him feel that he and every one has an individual relation to God which does not seem to be dependant on rank and endowments; but every soul is the handiwork of God. This appeared to Mr. Webster the chief subject of interest among the things which had ever engaged his thoughts.

God may be said to solicit our prayers. The Old Testament seems to instruct us how men formerly walked by sight; the New Testament teaches us that now men are to walk by faith. Visions, voices, dreams, messages from God by His servants the prophets, are now withdrawn. But God has not changed; He is educating us to trust in Him, giving us His written Word instead of signs and wonders. It must have been of thrilling interest, when messages, instructions, promises passed from heaven to earth, some of them direct answers to prayer; and not to a man

only, but even to young persons. George Herbert says :

“Sweet were the days when Thou didst lodge with Lot,
Struggle with Jacob, sit with Gideon,
Advise with Abraham, when Thy power could not
Encounter Moses’ strong complaint and moan.”

We cannot wonder if it should seem to any that the greatness of God consists in His condescension ; certainly if to them nothing is more surprising in the Most High than His notice of inferior things. God himself directs our attention to this. “For thus saith the High and Lofty One that inhabiteth eternity,” (surely such a Being cannot intend to speak to me,) “whose name is Holy ;” (then, of course there can be no hope that he can have regard for sinners;) “I dwell in the high and holy place ;” (and what more could be said to make us feel that He is unapproachable ; but hear the words which follow,) “with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.”

Such being the disposition of the Most High, we cannot doubt that He loves the child who loves Him. As David told Solomon, his son, “If thou seek Him He will be found of thee.” We may conclude that the younger a child is, the

more disposed God is to take notice of him. If we were called to say what attracts the special notice of God, we should reply, a young person praying. The younger you are the more noticeable are you to God. Therefore, we may say that young people should be considerate in their prayers, think seriously of what they say, remembering that the Most High God of heaven and earth hears every word, knows the thoughts of the heart.

No one may say with more assurance than a child, "The Lord thinketh upon me." God says, "When Israel was a child then I loved him and called my son out of Egypt." And in the text He says to the nation of Israel, "Wilt thou not from this time cry unto me, My Father, Thou art the guide of my youth?" From which we infer that God is in a peculiar manner interested in youth; whether a nation or individual is young, the period of youth is in an especial manner interesting to God; He in the text invites a nation to think of this, to love him as having been their guide when they were helpless as a people. We are warranted in applying these words to every young person as an invitation from God to choose Him to be the guide of his youth.

I will show you why we may suppose that God feels this peculiar interest in young persons.

I. GOD SEES THAT YOUTH IS THE FORMING PERIOD OF OUR BEING.

His eye surveys eternity, and along its measureless paths He sees your spirit capable of joy or woe. He who says, "I know all the fowls of the mountains, and the wild beasts of the field are mine," of course has a kind regard for you, who, the Saviour says, "are of more value than many sparrows." "Your heavenly Father feedeth them; are ye not much better than the fowls?" God says of Himself: "Of my years there is no end."

We may, each of us who love Him, lie in the dust before Him and joyfully say, Of my years there is no end. God says, "For I lift up my hand to heaven and say, I live forever." We may lay our hand upon our mouth and our mouth in the dust and say, I live forever. We know that this is as true as the words of God, when He says the same of Himself. We cannot but believe that God feels an unutterable interest in every one who is to inhabit a coming eternity. He looks upon every one destined to such an existence with peculiar interest in the opening years of life, for He knows that the first few years of that life determine in a great degree what we shall be.

We who have lived to manhood, look back to

the time when we were at the age of some of you ; we could at that age as well as later, have yielded to the invitation of God ; would that we had done so ; we should have been spared bitter sorrows, unavailing tears. We did not believe then, as we now see it to be true, that we were in the most important period of our being ; forming habits, committing sins, indulging tempers, cherishing dispositions, which years have been spent in correcting, if indeed we have up to the present time succeeded in conquering them. We should have been kept from displeasing God, awakening His lament over us : “ O that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end.” We hope now through infinite grace to stand accepted before God in Christ Jesus. But we say, “ Would that we had never sinned against Thee ; that we had harkened to Thy voice ; that our first years had been spent in obedience to Thy commands ; that we had, like the child Jesus when twelve years old, been “ about our Father’s business,” which would have been keeping His commandments, loving Him and loving others, — His two great precepts. Then we should have been spared regrets which forever will live in our memories, and in the memories of those who were witnesses of our sins.

In heaven we shall esteem those of our race

as greatly to be honored, who began in early youth to love God, instead of spending their first years in sinful ways. Perhaps we would willingly return to earth and renew our probation, to put our promise to the test of instantly obeying the commands of God; but in vain should we desire another probation; the good and the wicked will have lived their allotted time on earth, and it cannot be repeated; if utterly wasted it will be the subject of never ending sorrow; if partly misimproved and we are saved, though we have spent years in disobedience, we shall remember the words of God which we learned in youth: "O that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end."

God foreseeing this, calls upon us to be wise betimes. He cries to us, "Wilt thou not from this time cry unto me, My Father, Thou art the guide of my youth?"

II. ANOTHER REASON WHY GOD MAKES THIS APPEAL TO US IS, HE REJOICES IN A YOUNG CHILD'S LOVE.

We none of us set any value on our love to God; especially it is difficult to persuade children that it is a precious thing to God to be loved by them. Yet we are told that God re-

joiced in His works, He is pleased with the objects of His creative wisdom ; the wonders of the universe, stupendous as they are, make us ready to adore Him who gave them being. The colors which He has painted on the minerals, the vegetable kingdom, the waters, the sky ; the curious things which abound every where in the works of His hands ; the notes of music which greet us on all sides, do not fail to excite in us the belief that the Most High takes pleasure in these proofs of His divine wisdom. Many a young person has felt reproved for needlessly taking the life of a harmless creeping thing, by thinking, "I have destroyed that which it is beyond the skill of men and angels to restore. God alone gave the life of this creature which I have now destroyed!" That which could excite this just reflection in us is not to be compared with the interest which a human soul excites in God. Though, we are chief among the works of God, yet our foundation is the dust and we perish before the moth, and in the sight of God we are less than nothing, and vanity, yet we see plainly in the Scriptures that God is pleased to set a value on human affection above all things. As we read in the Old Testament, we cannot but notice that nothing occupies the thoughts of God so much as the feelings of men toward Him. You may have noticed that the

thing which is always mentioned first in the Books of the Kings and Chronicles is, whether each of those kings did right or did evil in the sight of the Lord ; and according as they did either, they had the blessing of the Almighty, or they incurred His displeasure.

We are to infer that the pleasure which it excites in the readers of the Bible who notice the commendable conduct of the young persons who are brought to view in Scripture, is but an echo of that which is called the voice of God in the soul. Great as His works are, none of them are capable of the emotion of love to God. The planetary world cannot feel like a child when it says, "Our Father which art in heaven." The poet represents them singing as they shine, "The hand that made us is divine;" but none of them framed a prayer, nor conceived of an utterance such as breathes from the Psalms: "I will love thee, O Lord my strength." There are, it may be, many kinds of voices in the world, and none of them is without signification; but it is only a devout heart which interprets their motions and brightness to represent its own love to God. We do not err if we suppose our own feelings on witnessing a child's love to its parents, to be a transcript of the feelings of God toward a child who loves Him. "Take heed that ye despise not one of these lit-

tle ones ; for I say unto you," the Saviour tells us, (for so we interpret His words), "angels appointed to guard them are angels of my presence, who do always behold the face of my father which is in heaven." We are prepared to believe that God loves the affection of a child if we fully receive the Saviour's testimony as to the love which is felt for them by the Most High God.

If God loves the young with a tender compassion, and merely for their being young, I observe

III. HE HONORS THE YOUNG PERSON WHO RENOUNCES SATAN AND THE WICKED, FOR HIM.

Probably Satan is never more ashamed than when defeated by a child. Young persons are right in believing that the wicked one tempts them ; they allege this when they are persuaded that there is something preternatural in certain violent impulses which they are conscious of, certain temptations which they feel persuaded could not have originated from themselves ; and they insist on this when they are in a mood which is far from a self-justifying spirit.

The apostle John speaks to the young as particularly liable to Satan's devices : "I write unto you, young men, because ye have overcome

the wicked one." Satan has great designs on the young. He would do more to succeed with the young, than with those who are confirmed in sin by evil habits ; for such persons need less solicitude on his part to accomplish their ruin. It is affecting to notice that in addressing fathers, young men, and children, the apostle John speaks first to children ; and more especially it is interesting to observe that which he says to them : "I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for His name's sake."

The sins of childhood need the atonement as really as the sins of the whole world. It seems to have been a great pleasure of the beloved disciple, who, at the time of writing this was in extreme old age, to assure these pious children that the great propitiation reached even to them. One other source of joy to him in connection with them he adds in the verse following : "I write unto you, little children, because ye have known the Father." He in these words gives us an assurance of the love of God to children who love Him ; for if they love Him, it is because He first loved them. We may feel confident that it excites the love of God and of holy beings to see the young resist temptation ; and here we repeat a remark just now made, that Satan is never filled with shame in a measure so marked, as when that Goliath is humbled by the sling and stone of a child.

We imagine the heavenly host, angels and saints, looking on with delight when a young person is steadfastly resisting his temptations, saying to him as the man Christ Jesus did when tempted of the devil: "Get thee behind me, Satan;" nor do the evil spirits probably feel more humbled than when they see the prince of hell overcome by a child. Perhaps it seems a little thing to a young child, tempted to do wrong to say, "How shall I do this great wickedness and sin against God?" Yet for saying this young Joseph in Egypt became "the shepherd and the stone of Israel;" he saved his father and brethren in famine, thus laying the corner stone of the nation of Israel. Saying this when tempted of the devil, as Joseph did, a young person may have it recorded of him on high, "then the devil leaveth him, and behold angels came and ministered unto him."

Probably Satan dreads the derision of angels as they see him skulking away from a little child who has resisted him, more than to meet Michael and his battalions in array against him. What means yonder shout? A child has refused to do wickedly when tempted by the devil; the devil retreats from him ashamed; the angels of God look on, and as they see their enemy and ours hieing away defeated by a young person, their exultation, perhaps, mortifies the hosts of hell

more than their shouts of conquest when he and they are defeated by the archangel and his cherubs. So the evangelist John tells us, "I write unto you, young men, because ye have overcome the wicked one." It is more to have the apostle who "saw the Apocalypse," write those few words to you than to have an emperor write your name in his legion of honor. For him to write it twice in two successive verses to young people, "I write unto you, young men, because ye have overcome the wicked one," is more to be desired than any earthly distinction. Such a crown fades; but to overcome the wicked one, is to have that young person's name emblazoned to the everlasting shame of wicked angels and wicked men.

The God of heaven is standing here making direct appeal to you in these affectionate words: "Wilt thou not from this time cry unto me, My Father, Thou art the guide of my youth?" He has His eye on one and another young person who has occasion to say, "When my father and my mother forsake me, then the Lord will take me up." God is interested in such, for "A father of the fatherless and a judge of the widow is the Lord in His holy habitation;" by which we infer that in heaven where many who dwell with Him have left their wives and children mourning

for them, God is known in a peculiar manner the father and the judge of the bereaved ones. Therefore, it is always peculiarly interesting to preach to those who have God for their God in a special sense. To them we may suppose that God intends the words of the text to be peculiarly addressed.

I will take it for granted that each one who hears this kind appeal from God will, in retirement, kneel and make response to it. Your answer may decide the course of your whole future life. God may connect blessings with your answer, for He has never said to the seed of Jacob, "Seek ye my face in vain." The heart of one and another will happily prompt them to say, "When thou saidst, Seek ye my face, my heart said unto Thee, Thy face, Lord, will I seek." If so, there will be joy in heaven, because young persons whom I here address, are to make a covenant with God.

A young man slept in a field. He took of the stones of the place and set them up for a pillow. No one would have anticipated for him such an experience as there befel him, for he was obliged to take that journey in flight from his brother whom he had defrauded. But the angels of God had appeared to him ascending and descending upon a stairway reaching from heaven to earth, and God stood above it and made covenant pro-

mises to him and to his posterity which extend to the present day. This same God speaks now to every one on the journey of life, offering to be the guide of his youth.

Methinks I hear some say, We would like to have this God for our guide ! Blessed emotion ! Cherish it, for it is a whisper of the divine Spirit. Use the means by which the spark of holy desire shall kindle to a flame. Seriously consider that declaration of Jesus Christ : " No man cometh unto the Father but by me." He who said this is He that came into the world to save sinners. He saves them by His death endured on the cross as an atonement for the sins of the world. This death was endured for us as individuals, and must be applied to you as an atonement for your sins. Believing on Christ is the way by which you can be at peace with God, and there is none other way under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved. God will not be the guide of one who has not made application to this Saviour, with faith in Him ; but him that cometh unto Him, " He will in no wise cast out." Put yourself as a condemned sinner in His hands, trusting in His sufferings and death for you. Then a covenant-keeping God ; — Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, will be your Guide. This Guide will not only take you safe home, but will keep you and bless you by

the way. You will feel constrained to talk with Him; you will read His Word; you will find it your constant support and joy. Your exulting song will be,

“Wherever He may guide me
No want shall turn me back;
My Shepherd is beside me,
And nothing can I lack.

“His wisdom ever waketh,
His sight is never dim;
He knows the way He taketh,
And I will walk with Him.”

Thus commit yourself to the Saviour who has been knocking at the door of your heart, and God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, will be your Guide and Portion forever.

XI.

THE DOCTRINE OF GERIZIM AND EBAL.

“Are they not on the other side Jordan, by the way where the sun goeth down?”—Deuteronomy xi : 30.

When Israel was about to cross the Jordan, God commanded Moses to set apart two mountains in Moab soon to be in the possession of Israel, to be symbolical places, proclaiming from the first entrance of the nation into the promised land, by an observance to be established upon them, a doctrine of which their future history would be an emphatic illustration.

The views of prophets from age to age repeated that doctrine. Isaiah, a prophet of kingly origin, uttered it five hundred years from the time of Moses, when he said, “Say ye to the righteous it shall be well with him, for he shall eat the fruit of his doings. Woe unto the wicked, it shall be ill with him, for the reward of his hands shall be given him.” Even to the

time of Hosea, not many years before the carrying away captive into Babylon, the doctrine was declared by that prophet to be destined still to continue. For he says, "Then shall ye return and discern between the righteous and the wicked: between him that serveth God and him that serveth Him not." That it was to be perpetuated to the end of time, is manifest in the last chapter of the Book of Revelation, at its close. Therefore the appointment of those two mountains, Gerizim and Ebal, before the children of Israel were settled in Canaan, to be as it were oracular places from which this doctrine alone should be statedly proclaimed, is impressive.

Moses was directed before the people had entered the promised land, to put the blessing on mount Gerizim, and the curse on mount Ebal, six of the tribes to stand over against the one and six over against the other; between the two, several hundred thousand people would assemble. With loud voices six of the Levites would read, or repeat from the lips of the leader of the nation, the blessings from Gerizim and the curses from Ebal.

When assemblies were held in the open air, the sense of the hearing was more acute than now, as we also know that memory was more retentive before printing was discovered, when the bards used to recite their poems and historians

their histories to great assemblies, showing a facility both on the part of the speakers and of the audiences, respectively, of uttering from memory and retaining long discourses. It may not be unsuitable to remind ourselves as a help to faith with regard to certain representations in the Scriptures, what power of voice is acquired by venders of articles in streets, also by commanders, by navigators, which gives us some idea of the distinctness as well as strength of those voices resounding through the plain ; blessings from Gerizim and curses from Ebal, heard by many thousands at once. This was the earliest form of preaching, under the impression of which the tribes kept up the memory of their duties to their Maker, enforced by the rehearsal of blessings and curses received by dictation from God.

The Bible, written book after book in the ages following the settlement of Israel in Canaan, is a repetition of the feature in the government of God which seems to have been hung over the doorway into Canaan. From the Red Sea into the Promised Land through the times of the Judges and of the Kings till the Captivity, and through the Captivity to the coming of Christ's blessings and curses, are continually announced, with the same distinctness ; though if either the blessings or the cursings can be said to have the greater prominence, one thing inclines us to say,

that the curses have the predominance. For it is to be observed that the curses engraven on the altar are rehearsed, while the blessings are not given.

The New Testament continues the same strain of blessing and cursing ; if heaven is promised, hell is with equal distinctness declared to be the portion of the unregenerate ; everlasting life and everlasting damnation are the two distinguishing phrases which set forth the destiny of the righteous and the wicked. If there be one sacred writer who is peculiarly emphatic in his distinctions between the two classes of mankind, or singular in his descriptions of the respective allotments which are to fall to either class, it is the beloved disciple who writes the Book which closes the Bible. Peter, Jude and John seem to be charged with special electric force in setting forth the doom of the wicked, as well as with special energy in depicting the rewards of the righteous. To them succeed a long line of ministers, whom Christ, when He ascended up on high, received as gifts to men ; they were charged by their master with this message : — “He that believeth shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned.” With varying degrees of faithfulness they have made this their message to men. When in times of apostasy the people and their teachers have degenerated, God

has now and then raised up one and another who have made the people feel that the duty of every minister is to be continually saying, "Woe is me if I preach not the Gospel." There is a temptation not to preach it, for it is a self-denying task to be continually prophesying evil to the sinner.

The experience of Jeremiah is seen to be the certain lot of those who like him are reprovers. So ministers lower their tone. Some persuade them that they can more easily draw than drive their hearers to repentance. Therefore, they prophesy smooth things; they preach about the Gospel instead of enunciating its warnings, making men see and feel the certain doom which awaits the impenitent; they fall into moral disquisitions, portray the beauties of Christianity, the character of Christ, the love of God; but the great theme of endless retribution is by some of them seldom mentioned; indeed those who dwell upon salvation from endless perdition by Christ, and warn men night and day with tears, are loaded with opprobrious epithets. The natural consequence of this is, union with pulpits who deny this doctrine, a most ominous feature of our times.

But here and there we find those who preach as the Levites uttered the words of the Most High on Gerizim and Ebal. George White-

field was an example ; our large towns, North and South, record his faithful ministry which set forth with the impartiality of Gerizim and Ebal the goodness and the severity of God. Some of the places where he preached bear witness that even his wonderful eloquence did not avail to make the doctrine of retribution acceptable to the human heart.

Another example of faithful enunciation of the doctrine of endless retribution, was seen in the preaching of the Rev. Jonathan Edwards of Northampton, Massachusetts. Considering how far the times have lapsed from his standard of preaching, we can scarcely believe that a man was bold enough, since the days of the prophets and apostles to preach as he did. He was celebrated in England and Scotland as a prince among divines ; in this country, no stated preacher ever had greater celebrity among the churches and pastors. Owing to his ministry, the influence of which was widely diffused, one part of our country was favored of God with a revival of religion in 1740, which was seldom if ever surpassed in this or any land, — a signal testimony to the power of a stated ministry, to the diffusive influences of a single pastor aided by the influences of the Holy Spirit. But what were the themes which this great man with his feeble voice, inanimate gesticulation, dwelt upon

in his preaching? for while we adore the sovereignty of God in the success of such a man, we cannot fail to recognize the connection which the Holy Spirit institutes between truth and the bestowment of His influences. Here is a list of his principal discourses, though in several instances when delivered, it was a series of discourses. In the seventh volume of his Works, some of the principal are these: "Justification by Faith alone; Men naturally God's enemies; The True Christian's Life a Journey toward Heaven; True Grace Distinguished from the Experience of Devils; The Excellency of Christ; Ruth's Resolution; The Justice of God in the Damnation of Sinners; Eternity of Hell Torments; The Punishment of the Wicked Intolerable; The Folly of Looking back when fleeing out of Sodom; The Unreasonableness of Indetermination in Religion; Unbelievers condemn the Excellency and Glory of Christ; God glorified in Man's Dependence; Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God."

The last of these sermons when preached at Enfield in 1741, is said to have electrified the congregation; it made them weep aloud; and this was not owing to the speaker's manner of delivery, for nothing could be more in contrast with the rhetorical power of Whitefield than the oratory of Edwards. A minister who sat in the

pulpit was so much affected by the preacher's inculcation of his subject, that he reached forward and pulled him by the coat saying, "But, Mr. Edwards, remember that God is merciful." Mr. Edwards knew that, and in its proper place he made it to be felt; but he was preaching then from the second clause in the thirty-second chapter of Deuteronomy: "their feet shall slide in due time."

No man's published sermons are more full of Christ than his. It was his intense conviction of what Christ is and has done, as appears in his History of Redemption and other treatises, the most of them being the substance of discourses from the pulpit, which made him feel the power of the apostle's question: "How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?"

O, that we who preach were willing to speak to men under the solemn impression that our hearers who die without accepting the great propitiatory sacrifice for sin, "shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on them." We are not called of God to preach to scholars, as such, any more than Paul regarded himself ordained to preach so as to gratify those who were seeking after a sign or wisdom, but to those who may be hearing from us for the last time the way of salvation from endless punishment. If we wish to please God we must tread popularity under

foot, urging men to accept the ransom which Jesus Christ has made for them in his own body on the tree.

We shall not be popular with the unbelieving world if we preach distinctively on retribution. It is not in place here to rehearse the history of this faithful preacher, his unpopularity at last with the rising generation, his fruitless efforts to maintain the way of the fathers. He yielded to the current and retired to be president of a college; but the foe of God and man has not ceased to this day to cast out his name as evil. You see him mentioned with reviling in our own day. So the enemies of Wickliffe, years after his death, dug up his bones and burned them and threw his ashes into the brook "Swift," which as it was said, "conveyed them into the Severn and the Severn into the sea, and so like his doctrine they have been spread the world over."

We must tread popularity under foot, and be ready to suffer the loss of all things. Doing this we shall indeed verify the words of the Saviour, "He that hateth his life shall keep it unto life eternal." We shall secure the lasting approval of good men in this world if we make it manifest that our constant aim is to preach salvation.

Here this question arises: Salvation from what? Salvation implies damnation. There is no salvation if there be no damnation. Who

hesitates to admit that Jesus Christ is a Saviour? But, Saviour from what? Tell me what is the opposite of Salvation? In other words, What will happen to a man who is not saved? We are told that "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life." What does "perish" mean? In what sense did the old world, being overflowed with water, "perish"? We can have no argument with one who says, It means that God took them to heaven; that Sodom and Gomorrah are now under discipline, and not suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.

This impressive ordinance of God, Gerizim and Ebal, was to keep before the minds of Israel the truth that the government of God over the children of men had inscribed over it, as it were, these words, "Behold, therefore, the goodness and the severity of God; on them which fell, severity, but toward thee goodness, if thou continue in His goodness; otherwise thou shalt be cut off." If there were any among them who were disposed to argue that God was too merciful to punish men for a few crimes committed in this short life; that He would wink at their short comings, that He would not suffer His infinite goodness to be overpowered by His displeasure against sin, they must have felt rebuked

when they saw one half of the nation gathered together to hear the promises of God, and the other six tribes employed to read the curses which God had threatened against sin. Some may say, No doubt, each tribe would have preferred to read the blessings. It may seem hard to you that the same six should always stand on Ebal. It seems like compelling the same minister to be always preaching sermons on punishment, and allowing his brother to dispense good tidings. But God does not take the same view with men of His ministry of wrath; if He did He would appoint bad angels only to execute His threatenings against him.

But we may doubt if the angel who cut off the first-born of Egypt was any the less amiable than the angel who led Joseph and Mary out of Egypt with the child Jesus, or that the angel who cut off Sennacherib's army, a hundred and eighty-five thousand Assyrians in one night, was less lovely than the angel who appeared to Gideon as he threshed wheat by the wine-press. That is a striking passage in the fifteenth chapter of Revelation: "And the seven angels came out of the temple clothed in pure and white linen and having their breasts girded with golden girdles." Executioners, in modern literature, are not arrayed in white linen or girded with gold. Poets and painters represent the officers of justice

as short, stout men, bow-legged, savage. Shake-
speare has such executioners of kings, royal la-
dies and children. None of God's acts of jus-
tice are cruel ; so that the executors of them are
arrayed in white with golden girdles.

Will this life be an end of retribution for sin ?
Such is the expectation of many. They pic-
ture the Most High as employing the agencies
of woe to make men submissive under Him ;
having accomplished which they say, He
will take all who submit, to heaven. All who
continue to rebel will, they think, endure further
discipline, by which all of them will be forced
to yield ; so that the universe will finally be set
free from sin.

Who has been his counsellor to teach the Most
High so beneficent a scheme ? We would all
be willing to see such a happy consummation.
There would not be one of our race who would
not say Amen ! to this good hope, did the Scrip-
tures countenance it. Singular it is that the
readers of the Bible have none of them pre-
vailed on the learned, humane, philanthropic, of
whom there have been so many in every age, to
substitute that scheme for the theory of endless
retribution. If the Word of God furnished the
semblance of an argument or less than that, of an
inquiry like that of Job about a future state,
" If a man die shall he live again ? " may we

not suppose that some Christian nation would by this time have witnessed the formation of a party of believers who would have rallied a multitude around them? But the silence of evangelical men with regard to any intimation in Scripture that the expectation of the wicked will not perish, is appalling.

One of the ablest men who has written on the subject resorts to mathematics for an argument. He says for substance, "Reckon up all the sins which a mortal or even a devil can have committed, the mortal in his three-score and ten years of probation, the fiend in his ten thousand years of depravity. A fearful sum. Take the largest. Call in as many millions as you will. Then think of eternity, which by and by will overpass all this, and suppose the following problem:—the dividend eternal retribution, the divisor the number of sins committed by an individual, the quotient the number of years of suffering allotted to each sin, which in due space of being will be millions of years of suffering for each sin. What can you say to this? we are confidently asked. Any one who is willing to attempt to answer had best be at the foot of the cross, where the God-man is making expiation for the sins of the whole world, the sum of which is larger than the small sum above stated. There let him propose this question: "How shall we

escape if we neglect so great salvation?" Let him not feel it necessary to answer questions with which some will try to perplex him about the heathen, infants, imbeciles, backsliders; but insist on saying after a divine example, "I will also ask you one thing," "How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?"

It must be a great salvation if He who came into the world to save sinners was God made flesh, a propitiation not for our sins only, but for the sins of the whole world. Let me repeat an illustration used elsewhere. Columbus argued that there must be a western continent to balance the globe. So we say that this great salvation implies that there must be a great damnation. The unutterable horror with which the mind is filled in contemplating endless punishment may be regarded as having its equivalent in the astonishment with which the mind is filled in contemplating God made flesh for sinful men, going to the cross, thence being the tenant of the tomb, delivered for our offences, raised for our justification. Let him who tries to measure with the eye of an insect, the great gulf fixed to make impassable the return of the impenitent dead from hell to heaven, first measure with his eye the distance traversed by the Incarnate God from the throne which was before all things, to close the prison-door of lost angels, ere the morning

stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy over this world ordained to be the scene of man's redemption. Could we institute the comparison, we should learn, perhaps, that for the Word to make Himself of no reputation, and take upon Himself the form of a servant, stands first among the things into which angels desire to look rather than the everlasting punishment of those who pierced Him, crucifying Him afresh, compelling the remonstrance, "How often would I have gathered you,—and ye would not."

If we stumble at the assignment of interminable misery for sin committed in a mere span of time, let us ask ourselves why do we begin to stumble at this, when there is long before, more than enough to confound us. The Bible says, that by one man sin entered into the world and death by sin; that by one man's disobedience many were made sinners; that by one man's offence death reigned by one; that by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation. This has continued for at least five thousand eight hundred and seventy-three years; all in consequence of one man's disobedience. Reckon, if you can, the misery of the human race for these fifty or sixty centuries, the consequence of one man's disobedience; say how long it took that one man to commit that one act of disobe-

dience. Can you believe that by one man's offence committed in a brief space of time, there have been fifty or sixty centuries of human sin and misery? Believe it or not, the truth stands recorded; yet men say, God cannot surely inflict ages of misery for the consequences of sins committed in a life time; whereas He has done it in consequence of one man's disobedience. The added transgressions of each and every sinner make it no less true that by one man's offence death reigned by one.

All through the New Testament there is the same parallelism of blessing and cursing which there was in the Old Testament. Gerizim and Ebal stand with responsive blessings and curses on the saint and sinner. The language of the blessings and curses from Gerizim and Ebal were not so terrible as the language of the Saviour in the New Testament. Revelation does not assume milder tones as it approaches the evening. There are words in the Saviour's discourses relating to future retribution which we are more disposed to read in a lowered tone than anything in Deuteronomy. Then we come to the apostle Paul in the Epistle to the Romans, in the first two chapters of which language is brought to the highest pitch of intensity in describing the indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish threatened against every soul that doeth evil.

At last comes the beloved disciple and closes the sacred book with imagery, because literal speech was not adequate to express the intense-ness of his conceptions. One expression is used by him to denote the future punishment of the wicked which has no equivalent in the Old Testament: "And said to the mountains, Fall on us, and to the hills, Cover us from the face of Him that sitteth upon the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb." Thus we are brought down to the end of the world and find the Gerizim and Ebal of Deuteronomy extending their symbolical presence through the last book of the Bible, where the waves of a dread ocean come ashore.

I come now to propose the question in the text. If it is in figurative language, the greatness of the theme justifies it. Gerizim and Ebal extend their influence down to the boundary line of this world and the next. The question is: "Are they not on the other side Jordan by the way where the sun goeth down?" Is there not a Gerizim and Ebal in eternity? forever a heaven and hell? Do not blessing and cursing follow us? Is not God the same on the other side Jordan by the way where the sun goeth down, as He is here?

I once looked from the window of a hotel in Switzerland on the lake of Geneva, one morning just before sunrise, and was astonished to see im-

ages of mountains in the lake. No mountains were near, or in the horizon. An intelligent fellow traveler said to me, "They are the Alps. You cannot see them, but the refraction of the rising sun-light throws down their images upon the lake from the upper air." The Bible is a lake on the surface of which the light beyond Jordan throws down images of things which are there, among which are Gerizim and Ebal.

On this subject of the eternity of retribution after death, one consideration has for a long time settled the question which used to agitate my mind when I thought if it could be just to award an endless penalty for sins committed here. Leaving to the omniscient Judge many things which the light of eternity alone can make plain, I said, If the Word was made flesh and suffered death for me, and I reject or neglect that propitiation for my sins, I believe that there is no other remedy. He that spared not His own Son, will not spare him who treads the blood of that Son under foot. We must not think the heinousness of sin is in the number or character of our misdeeds; but in not believing on Christ. No one can be lost who believes in Christ, flagrant, numberless, though his sins may have been. Observation and reflection have deepened my conviction that more are saved by simple faith in Christ at the last than may have been feared;

and this I say, without abating one tittle of conviction that too much cannot be said of the hazard which there is in delaying compliance with the terms of salvation.

Such cases as the following make a happy impression on my mind : A young sailor fell from the yard-arm of his ship into the sea. The ship was put about, he was found, but senseless. Restoratives were successful. On regaining his consciousness he soon turned over upon his knees and uttered a prayer of consecration to Christ, saying to those around him, "This is what I did when I supposed myself to be drowning. I gave my soul to Christ. I felt that I was accepted through that one simple act of faith in the Saviour." It will not be your sin that will destroy you. Unbelief will be the perdition of more under the Gospel than all sins. All the curses of Mount Ebal will light on him who had the offers of pardon from the Son of God and died in unbelief. The blessings of a thousand Mount Gerizims will be imputed to the greatest sinner who simply believes in Jesus. "Who is wise, and he shall understand these things ; prudent, and he shall know them ; for the ways of the Lord are right, and the just shall walk in them, but the transgressors shall fall therein."

XII.

ON LOVING THE UNSEEN REDEEMER.

“Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.” — 1 Peter 1: 8.

THE most remarkable illustration of human love is and always has been, the personal attachment of Christian believers to Jesus Christ. The larger part of his Apostles suffered martyrdom from love to Him. The history of Christianity under the emperors shows that ingenuity was exhausted in the invention of tortures for them. Letters, hymns and prayers written in the early ages, rehearsing the words and deeds of the first Christians show, that whether they were fanatics or otherwise, their love to their Lord and Master was unparalleled. The apostle Paul tells us that from personal love to Christ, he had suffered the loss of all things; and many things had he to lose. He lost a lucrative practice as a Roman and Jewish lawyer; his reputation was utterly destroyed;

he having no friends left to him but the despised Christians. It would seem strange to us if some member of the bar in great repute, should be publicly beaten with rods by the civil authorities and several times stoned; well might he say that as a professional man he had suffered the loss of all things; after that, none would entrust their lives, fortunes, characters in his hands. His was a specimen of the treatment which the followers of Jesus of Nazareth endured, from love to Him. One specification of their treatment might have been expressed in these words: "they were tempted." It was not all stones, dens and caves, wandering in sheepskins and goatskins; blandishments, flattery, tears, the loss of most desirable connections, prospects of wealth, reputation, fame, solicited many of them; and we may suppose that in resisting these things, especially when pressed upon them with kindness, disinterested affection, and gentleness, some of them actually suffered more than others did who endured martyrdom. It was hard parting with endeared friends; but there were times when some of them had to give and receive the last embrace, see their friends going back to home and affluence, and the sweet securities of law and order, and they themselves consigned to want and obloquy; homeless; outcast, among the dens of wild beasts. And all this when a single word of

recantation, abjuring the name of Jesus Christ, would make their fortune, would put the crown of professional or social distinction upon them. But their motto was one which was perpetuated down to the sixteenth century, used by Lambert the martyr when at the stake for his religion, he said, in answer to the men who offered him life and liberty if he would sign a recantation, "None but Christ, none but Christ." Pliny the younger wrote to the Emperor Trajan: "They are accustomed to meet before daylight, and sing hymns to Christ as to God."

This love to Christ is perpetually manifesting itself from the dawn of Christianity, as though the multitude of the heavenly host had given the melody, and it were learned and sung by all who loved the babe of Bethlehem.

But the most remarkable thing in this love to Christ is, that it was felt by those who had never known, personally, this wonderful being. Peter being then alive, of course there may have been others living who were cotemporaries of Christ. None of them it seems, were included in this address. The people to whom Peter now writes were not, therefore, a small company of enthusiasts, who by association, with celebrations, lectures, and mystical ceremonies, had created a fictitious kind of enthusiasm among their own clan. Such clans were common, especially when

a new teacher or founder of some school arose. But there was no society. These epistles are not addressed to any body of people in one place, organized, and keeping up each other's zeal and love, or even their faith, by their rites, processions, harangues. The words of the text are addressed to "strangers scattered abroad throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia." You will observe, therefore, that it is to individuals that these words of the text are addressed. They might reach a man in a prison, or hidden in a den from persecutors, or working in the mines as a slave ; or a solitary believer in the household of the emperor ; no meetings for exhortation within reach ; forgotten, it may be, by all ; yet in the solitary heart of each of these strangers, scattered abroad, Peter knew that his words would find a response.

Like a great magnet passing over heaps of rubbish there would be pieces of steel, which, as the attraction went by would turn. And so it is now. When this text is read, there are hearts which say, "Now we shall hear something about Christ." His name is as ointment poured forth. His name is "above every name." It is the only name which among believers is universal, sovereign. They will differ over the name of every thing else, even in religion ; but when it comes to this name, there is a power like that of the morn-

ing light in nature. May His Spirit guide us as it shall now be set forth.

The subject of my discourse is

The love of Christians to the unseen Redeemer.

I. WHO IS HE?

One word expresses Him : "WONDERFUL."

Within a few weeks, by steam, from any of our ports, you could reach a place where a child was born who is now at the head of the universe. You will not understand this as a figure of speech, nor am I indulging in large expressions. As you, once an infant, are now at man's estate, He is now Lord of all. He was a man like us, hungry, athirst, asleep, limited in the exercise of His powers of mind and body. Yet "all things were made by Him, and without Him was not any thing made that was made." Now, He has "gone unto heaven and is at the right hand of God ; angels, authorities, and powers being made subject unto Him." He will one day sit as Judge of all ; before Him shall be gathered all nations, and He shall separate them one from another. He is "God manifest in the flesh."

II. BY HIS DEATH HE MADE AN ATONEMENT FOR SIN, REACHING IN ITS INFLUENCE FROM THE BEGINNING TO THE END OF TIME.

He was "slain from the foundation of the world."

They who have believed in this unseen Redeemer, have had personal experience of His power to effect their peace with God. Had He been made known to them merely as a prodigy, though the most wonderful of beings, this would not have excited their enthusiasm. The powers of nature do not so affect the hearts of men as Christ has affected them. They believed in Him as the God-man whom the apostles dwelt with as a personal friend, with whom they sat at meat, who called them "friends," had compassion on their ignorance, prayed for them, laid His hands on them and blessed them. They thus believed that all which He had been and promised to be to His immediate disciples, He would be to them. Some of His words, no doubt, were reported by ear witnesses; for example, "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." That passage repeated, when two or three of them met in a desert, created enthusiasm. Take another: "If any man love Me my Father will love him, and I will love him and will manifest myself to him." They lived on those words, no doubt, from day to day. Then came those gracious promises: "My sheep shall never perish;" "All that the Father hath given Me shall come to Me; and him that

cometh unto Me, I will in no wise cast out.” “As My Father hath loved Me, even so have I loved you; continue ye in my love.” Then those affecting words foretelling His death:— “Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.” “I lay down my life for the sheep.” “Every one which seeth the Son and believeth on Him hath everlasting life, and I will raise him up at the last day.” Then the story of His betrayal, and His voluntary surrender of Himself, and His furnishing the testimony on which His life was taken; of His words and actions on the cross to His mother and to the beloved disciple, and the penitent thief, and His prayer for His murderers, His death, His burial by Joseph and Nicodemus, His resurrection attested by the eleven and by other companies, and by five hundred brethren at once; His ascension, the appearance of the two men in white apparel declaring His coming again;— all this made believers love Him, trust in Him, “rejoice in Him with joy unspeakable and full of glory,” and “suffer the loss of all things for His name’s sake,” and die for Him.

Ignatius bared his breast to the lions in the amphitheatre when led forth to die for the Lord Jesus. Polycarp said, “Eighty and six years have I served Him and He has never failed me; shall I now forsake Him?” This was “joy unspeakable and full of glory.”

One thing he could not have said unless he were either an arrant imposter, or, divine: "He that loveth father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me, and he that loveth son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me."

A young father and mother are bending over their first-born asleep, and they think of those words; there is one who claims a stronger love than they feel for the little child; not that they must not love their little one, but this unseen Friend says, "there is more in me to love than natural affection can find in that child." The young parents acknowledge it and give themselves and their child to their unseen Redeemer. Never, never was there such love on earth, never, we may safely say, was there such love in heaven till redeemed sinners bore it thither. It has been well said, that but for sin there would have been no minor key in music; and what would music be without that key?

The fall of angels, the vacant thrones, their harps hung up, inspired angelic strains no doubt, with the impassioned wail which so wonderfully varies the earthly hallelujah; but the death of Christ and all the melting themes inspired by that event, have given to the song of redemption that unequalled power which made the writer of the Revelation say of it as he listened, "And no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty

and four thousand which were redeemed from among men."

III. THE LOVE OF CHRISTIANS FOR JESUS CHRIST IS THE SAME NOW AS EVER.

This love to an unseen Saviour which Peter in the text describes as felt by those believers to whom he wrote, continues to our day. It is a love which absorbs every other, supplants every other, compensates for the loss of every other.

There was a young Christian engaged to be united in sacred bonds to one who, on further acquaintance, proved not to be as she at first supposed, a believer in Christ. It cost her a mighty sacrifice to dissolve the tie, as she felt constrained to do. She gave up a competency and something more ; she sacrificed relationships which were inviting, because she could not take for her nearest and dearest earthly friend one who did not love her Redeemer. And what was the consequence ? By this experience that young Christian was qualified to write the hymn beginning,

"Jesus, I my cross have taken,
All to leave and follow Thee ;
Naked, poor, despised, forsaken,
Thou henceforth my all shalt be."

All over the world wherever the name of Je-

us is known, there are hearts which love Him with this joy which is unspeakable and full of glory. Among the powers of nature there is one which reminds us of it: The supposed influence of the moon over the tides. Dark, and even stormy may be the night, and the sky give no sign of the moon, yet the mariner in mid ocean may feel the influence of the tide, and every shore will record its ebb and flow. The sand rows on the beach, and the small pools with their tiny inhabitants, the lifted keel and the floating vessel, witness every six hours its changes. He who thus influences the sea by the earth's satellite, controls unseen, the hearts of all His people, scattered over continents and oceans, in islands, deserts, and the city.

IV. IT IS NOTICEABLE IN LOVE TO AN UNSEEN CHRIST, THAT THOSE WHO HAD NEVER SEEN HIM LOVED HIM AS MUCH AS THOSE WHO WERE HIS PERSONAL ASSOCIATES.

Indeed we may go further; they loved Him more than these did when He was yet alive. After His ascension, Peter might be expected still to love Christ. James and John with Peter had peculiar reasons for loving Him. All who personally knew Him and were touched by His character, words and sufferings, might be ex-

pected to cherish a life-long affection for Him. But you will notice in the words of the text and context that Peter does not exhort these Christians on this subject, — no, he merely describes them and rejoices over them; he speaks twice of their overflowing love to the unseen Christ.

If love to Christ, then, is not dependent on sight, and those who have lived since His day have loved Him even more than His first disciples could before His death and resurrection, one thing follows of exceeding great importance and interest to us.

I observe then,

V. ALL MAY LOVE HIM.

This is important to us, because without it the subject of love to Christ is of no more interest to us than the love of Joseph and Benjamin, or of David and Jonathan, or, in profane history, of Damon and Pythias. If they to whom Peter wrote, scattered everywhere, loved Christ more than Peter himself during the Savionr's life actually did, we see that love to Christ can be felt by us, can be enjoyed by us, as well as by them. Joyful thought! we are included in those to whom Peter addressed his epistles, — “to all who in every place call on the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, both theirs and ours: and with

those on whom another apostle pronounces that benediction : “ Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity.”

If the characteristic of love to the Saviour is love to an unseen Christ, A CHRISTIAN OUGHT NEVER TO FEEL UNHAPPY AT HIS SUPPOSED ABSENCE FROM HIM.

We should so feel toward Christ as to warrant those words being addressed to us when cast down : “ In whom though now ye see Him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.” Let Him manifest Himself as much or as little as He pleases, we should not allow our feelings to depend on this.

Much of the despondency in Christians is owing to their not understanding one object which there evidently is in these words : “ Whom not having seen ye love.” We are to love Him by faith ; love Him unseen as though we saw Him ; for faith is a substitute for sight. “ Ye see Him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.”

FINALLY. IF SO MUCH IS TRUE AS REGARDS THE LOVE OF CHRISTIANS TO THE SAVIOUR, WE MAY BE ASSURED THAT THERE IS RECIPROCAL LOVE ON THE PART OF CHRIST TO THEM.

Strange would it be if He who is love incar-

nate should prove cold and heartless, He who inspired His servant John to write such loving words to us as we find in His gospel.

Let us take heed to the whispers of the Holy Spirit, whose mission it is to reveal Christ unto us.

His name closes the word of God, who is called the Word: "He which testifieth these things saith, Surely, I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come Lord Jesus.

XIII.

ON PASSING BY ANGELS TO RE-DEEM MEN.

“For verily he took not on him the nature of angels, but he took on him the seed of Abraham.” — Hebrews 2 : 16.

A part of an angelic race, superior to man, apostatized from God. No Redeemer interposed to help them. The inhabitants of this world apostatized from God, and a Redeemer took on Him their nature to redeem them. Who He was, we learn from these inspired words: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him, and without Him was not any thing made that was made. And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father full of grace and truth.”

Here is a disclosure ; and then a veil is drawn over it. Doubtless this is best for us. We could not have understood a clearer revelation. As it

is, we cannot solve one of the questions which human curiosity would ask. He "was with God and He was God." If any one will resolve that mystery, he may, perhaps, proceed and explain the dark things which multiply as we proceed. One who is God "was made flesh and dwelt among us." And of Him we are told in the text, "He took not on Him the nature of angels, but He took on Him the seed of Abraham."

Some one, then, in the Jewish line took on Him the nature of man, and did not take on Him the nature of angels. Who was He? One is spoken of here who existed first not as man or angel, but took on Him the nature of man, not of angels. He, therefore, has two natures; one of them is ours. But it is implied in the text that it was optional with Him which of these two natures He should take; In the plainest terms, therefore, an incarnation is here declared; and the first chapter of John makes it certain that the Divine Word joined human nature to Himself, and with these two natures in one person, He became the Redeemer of men.

Why did He not for the same purpose for which He took on Him our nature, take the nature of angels? Here is the interesting point which the text brings to view.

Among the spheres which compose our solar system, this world is the smallest of the primary

planets but two. But we greatly err if we estimate the worth of a world by its size. We are in the habit of supposing that our Earth must be inferior in all respects because it is small. The Creator has not adopted such a standard of value. The wise men of the East came to Jerusalem no doubt expecting that the King of kings was born there ; but they found His birthplace to be Bethlehem, which was little among the thousands of Judah. "He chose David also, and took him from the sheepfold, to feed Jacob his people and Israel His inheritance."

We may expect to find that the Creator has made use of this world of a size thus inferior, to pour contempt on pride. If He who made all things took upon Him man's nature, we may feel sure that there is in that nature some intrinsic excellence and greatness, one proof of which is that it is capable of being united with the person of the Word who was in the beginning with God, and was God.

But so, unquestionably, was the angels' nature; for man is a little lower than the angels. Here were two fallen races before the eye of the Redeemer, and we cannot doubt that it was optional with Him to redeem either of them, or both. Why He did not redeem both must be left to sovereign wisdom ; to Him who giveth no account of any of His matters. Why in deciding to re-

deem one of them He chose to save man and not angels is the subject before us, not for our opinion or judgment, but for our contemplation and humble fear.

I. FALLEN ANGELS, IF REDEEMED, WOULD NO DOUBT BECOME AS GREAT AND GLORIOUS AS BEFORE.

An angel certainly is as precious as the soul of a Hottentot. Why are the inhabitants of Labrador or of the South Seas redeemed by Christ, and not angels? What can be said of a pagan's soul as to its future development and happiness which cannot be said of an angel redeemed? There would have been one consideration at least in favor of redeeming an angel. The pagan does not know what he has lost. The angel is conscious of his depravity. An angel's memory surely is worth redeeming. He recollects the moment when he waked into life in heaven; when he first looked upon the face of God; when consciousness first possessed him; when he said, What am I? who am I? where am I? and joy began to course through him and the whispers of divine love soothed him and made him acquainted with himself, and the first-born of his companions drew near and taught him, and at last he came to the full knowledge of what existence is. All the succession of the

heavenly hours, days, years, and centuries, or whatever they are called, is remembered by him ; his loves, his joys, his discoveries, his first adventures into unknown latitudes of bliss opening still into new and more ecstatic joys ; and all those quiet, meditative hours when in communion with God and his own soul he said, This is heaven, eternity in heaven ; and looking upon beings superior to himself and gazing abroad on a universe unexplored, he said, "It doth not yet appear what we shall be."

Though it is revolting to the thoughts to contemplate the condition of fallen angelic beings on account of their unspeakable degradation, it is only more so than to contemplate Satan, because his chiefdom gives him a dignity in our eyes, much as we respect a principal bandit, while we detest his men. There is no reason to doubt that those evil spirits who took possession of the souls and bodies of human beings in the time of Christ were fallen angels, because Satan is called their prince. Moreover, they were anticipating a day of judgment, which is some confirmatory evidence that they were those for whom a day of doom is prepared, when they will be sent out into the abyss. It was a legion of fallen angels who had possession of that poor demoniac among the tombs, crying and cutting himself with stones. It was a fallen angel who tor-

mented that child at the foot of the mount of transfiguration ; and they were fallen angels who begged to be sent into the swine.

We see in this world enough of degradation made by sin to keep us from doubting the power of sin to degrade fallen angels into devils, and devils into alliance with swine. But the memory of innocence and of bliss in heaven no doubt remains in them. What a good work it would have been to redeem that memory and restore that angel. How sad, one might say, to think that Christ would not redeem him, but went after South Sea Islanders and the Aborigines of the British Isles, than whom none was ever more lost to shame, or more distant from God. And what a wicked world this, which He redeemed, has proved. How hard to bring any portion of it right and to keep it so. In countries where the Gospel has had influence for generations, scenes are enacted which equal the deeds of barbarous tribes. After a long conflict between good and evil in this world, the end will be that the earth and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Thus far the few are saved ; the many hate God.

II. But in reply it may be said, HIS SUCCESS MIGHT HAVE BEEN NO BETTER HAD CHRIST MADE REDEMPTION FOR ANGELS INSTEAD OF FOR MEN.

Suppose that Christ had become angelic instead of becoming flesh, taking the nature of angels instead of ours, and in their abode had lifted up His voice, "Repent ye and believe the Gospel;" "Behold I stand at the door and knock;" "Come unto Me all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest." "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, to open the prison doors, to set at liberty them that are bound;" and then that He had suffered an ignominious punishment there as He did here, stooping as low in shame as on Calvary, bearing some awful emblem of woe as He bore the cross; and thus, making atonement for angels, had pointed them to heaven through His sufferings for them; would they have fled for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before them? would there have been a former occupant of a throne in heaven but would have believed on the Lord Jesus Christ and been saved?

While we cannot settle this question, it may be well to ask, What has His success been with men who have actually been slipping on the brink of perdition? How has it been in our congregations? Are there any among your acquaintances who have been brought near to death and who in their own just apprehension would have perished had they died, but are now as careless as ever, as far from God, as ignorant

of Christ? What would keep fallen angels from saying in answer to kind and earnest appeals, "I know all this, but I do not feel it; how am I to believe in Christ; how can I love Him; how can I love God, with such a heart as mine?" and would they not say this up to the last moment of probation, as members of Christian congregations do when they come to their end?

Angels might have invented objections to Him as men did; some might go so far as to deny His Godhead and incarnation, and ask whether a good God would let His innocent Son visit such an abode, to suffer and die for devils; and what virtue there could be in the sufferings of one for the sins of others; and whether it is just to substitute an innocent being for the guilty? If any one supposes that every fallen angel would at once have accepted the offers of Christ and would have returned to his allegiance with godly sorrow and repentance, it may be asked why men in full view of perdition refuse to accept pardon by Christ? Does any one say, The experience of the infernal prison and the prospect of returning to heaven would prevail where all other reasons might have been fruitless? Being in the prison would not of itself change the feelings of the sinner toward God. Some might think it would. But a feeling of degradation and humiliation, of having been a con-

vict, of going back to the old service and scenes with the recollection of apostasy is no preparation to accept forgiveness.

We are inclined to think that if rational creatures called to repentance are treated as free agents, they stand a better chance to accept forgiveness and the offer of restoration in such a world as this, than in a place where they have been subjected to ignominious torture. In this world, no distinction is made by the common providence of God between the evil and the good; but the same sun and rain, the fruits of the earth and all the blessings of life come alike to the good and to the sinner. Therefore, however great our sins against God may be, we need none of us feel abandoned, or made ignominious. We cannot conceive of more favorable circumstances than ours for accepting the offers of pardon; or a condition less likely to predispose the mind toward accepting them than the loss of heaven would be, and the degradation of being thrust down to hell.

It is seriously to be questioned whether fallen angels ever could be disposed by their punishment to love God. We will not argue the point, for it is not debatable. They never will, and whether they ever would requires more knowledge than we possess to decide. But, perhaps it may be said, one reason why Christ did

not take upon Him the nature of angels to redeem them is, that having fallen into the pit they could not consistently with the laws of their nature be recovered ; that an intelligent being subjected to such punishment would not accept any efforts to save him, or if saved, that his recovery would not exalt the grace of God so much as the restoration of the effeminate races of men. While we recognize this as a possible second cause, we must not forget that the power and grace of God could overcome all such second causes ; that the God who found a ransom for man could find a way of redeeming lost angels ; but that being hopelessly lost the sinning angel is given over to the direct operation of natural laws ; these laws being such as are now described. While God is not hindered by natural laws from doing His pleasure. He does not violate them ; but He can find a way to maintain and even exalt them while He suspends them as to the sinner himself ; which we see was done by the atonement. So we see this world wonderfully adjusted as a probationary state ; everything in it says, "Be ye reconciled to God."

Mercies and afflictions come hand in hand to our dwellings and our hearts, and the affliction seems to be equally our friend with mercy ; all things being arranged to spare our feelings of pride and shame, making it reputable and be-

coming to be a Christian, instead of its being like standing in the stocks or coming out of a penitentiary, or going into one in joining the Christian church. Without making any statement which would properly be construed as limiting the power of divine grace, we are justified in saying that according to the laws which govern free agents, it was a more hopeful work to redeem man, than the angels who kept not their first estate.

He who took not on Him the nature of angels has not met with these results which reason would have predicted. Jesus Christ has not won the hearts of the nations, or the hearts of any one of them, even where His Gospel is perfectly understood. He knew from the beginning that it would be so. He knew it when He was about to make the atonement. It is a sad representation for us to say that He will finally console Himself by declaring that on the whole He is glad that things are no worse, that as many are saved as could be expected, and though He regrets His failure to save all, He is grateful that so many have accepted His offers.

Christ will never be the object of commiseration, of sympathy and condolence. "These words spake Jesus and lifted up His eyes to heaven and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify

thee. As thou hast given Him power over all flesh that He may give eternal life to as many as thou hast given Him." While the atonement is sufficient for all, and all are invited to avail themselves of it, there is a certain portion of the race for whom it is efficient who will assuredly be saved; and of course the Saviour had special reference to them when He gave Himself a ransom for all. He "is the Saviour of all men, specially of those that believe."

We cannot find fault with this on the ground of its being partial, unless we begin further back and impugn the justice of God in passing by fallen angels and determining to provide for the salvation of men. He did not take upon Himself the nature of angels; He might have done so; He left them where He found them, where they had chosen to be. He finds all men in a state of ruin; if they will acknowledge it and avail themselves of His interposition in their behalf, they may be saved; but some will not believe, and they prefer to run the risk and take the consequences. It is optional with God to let them all perish, or interpose and make some willing to believe. He does no injustice to any if He prevails on some; none can find fault with God for leaving them to have their own way; it will with perfect truth be said to every one who fails to be saved, "Ye would not come to

Me that ye might have life." Every one is as religious as, on the whole, he wishes to be.

It is the great mystery of wisdom that while God does His pleasure, it is in such a way that every man exercises his free choice.

III. THOSE WHO DO NOT ACCEPT REDEMPTION PROVIDED FOR THEM BY THE SON OF GOD ARE TO BE ASSOCIATED HEREAFTER WITH A RACE OF SINNERS WHOM CHRIST DID NOT REDEEM.

Nothing surely is better adapted to make us accept the offers of the Gospel; for if Christ passed them by and came to save us, no fancy can picture what it must be to receive from His lips a consignment to their abode and to their society. It is well known on the authority of the early Christian writers that the power of evil spirits over men was wonderfully abridged with the coming of Christ. He told the seventy whom He sent out, when they returned and told Him, "Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name," "I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven." Their power continued for a while after the coming of Christ; as we see in the New Testament, where we learn their awful malice and also their power, no doubt that we may be warned lest we fall into

their hands. If they took possession of a human being, a legion of them at once, they must be cruel and brutal; nor can fancy picture the direful miseries of the poor victims who fell into their hands.

People do not like to be reminded of such a fearful liability; but if too painful to be reminded of it in a world of mercy, let us think what it must be to have the last sentence upon all who did not love Christ sufficiently to give Him common hospitality. "I was an hungered and ye gave me no meat." Then mercy will have finished all her invitations and returned forever to the bosom of her injured, her slighted God.

IV. THE SUBJECT OPENS TO US A VIEW OF HUMAN HAPPINESS FOR ALL WHO ACCEPT OF SALVATION.

If the Redeemer sought the greater amount of happiness in those for whom He decided to make atonement, He surely will find it in us who enter heaven, not as a recovered seat from which we were ignominiously expelled, but a world new, untried, awakening in us sensations of wonder and joy which now it doth not enter into the heart of man to conceive. There will be a quality in our joy which could never be

known to those who fell from heaven. And shall we lose it? Are we looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God? "And these shall go away into everlasting punishment, prepared" (not for them, but) "for the devil and his angels."

God exercises the same sovereignty now in choosing whom to save which He did in choosing men rather than angels. There is often a feeling of wonder at the class of people who are called into the kingdom of God, and at the same time astonishment at the omission of many whom we should consider an acquisition, and creditable to Him who saves them. Looking into the community we may often question why certain persons of remarkable endowments are not brought into the number of the faithful, while some are added to it whom we never would have chosen. So in the Christian church, we see some who we cannot doubt are regenerate persons, but it requires forbearance and Christian charity to regard them as members of the body of Christ: and some are passed by whom we would choose first if the selection had been confided to our judgment and taste. We forget that, perhaps, to the searcher of hearts we and those interesting people give more occasion for forbearance than those who repel us. But whether it be so or not, we must apply our text,

and remember Him who "took not on Him the nature of angels but the seed of Abraham." The wise, the mighty, the noble, are not all the subjects of the divine call; indeed "not many" of them are so distinguished; but "base things, and things which are not hath God chosen to bring to nought things that are, that no flesh may glory in His presence." Lady Huntington said that she thanked God for the letter "m," without which the Scripture must have read, "not *any* noble are called."

It will exalt the grace of God to behold high in honor and power hereafter, some whom we thought hardly worth saving except as objects of compassion, and however much joy there may have been among the angels of God at their repentance, it made little sensation here. "And, behold, there are last that shall be first." Let us take heed how we despise one of these little ones. Find a soul in whom there are Scriptural evidences of regeneration, and it is one whom Almighty God has quarried and hewn, and is preparing for some honorable place in His building which that soul will fill with a most remarkable adaptation. As the stone which the builders refused is become the head of the corner, so will it be with much of the material in the whole building. And, therefore, if we are highly cultivated or possess great natural endowments, it

does not increase our prospect of being saved ; for unless we are humble God will pass us by ; “for verily He took not on Him the nature of angels.” “He will beautify the meek with salvation.” Perhaps one reason why angels are forever passed by, while to the poor the Gospel is preached, and very common people are made kings and priests unto God, is to show all the subjects of God’s government, that none are too high for God to reach if they sin, none too precious for Him to spare if they keep not their first estate.

V. THERE ARE LIMITS TO MERCY AND PROBATION.

While we must ascribe this wholly to the sovereign pleasure of God, we perceive that apostacy makes recovery in the Scriptural sense impossible. “It is impossible for those who were once enlightened and have tasted of the heavenly gift, —if they shall fall away to renew them again to repentance.” Hence apostate angels were less likely to be redeemed, and we have seen that they were not recovered. Here we have an argument against probation after death. If Christ fails to redeem us in this world, the abandonment of fallen angels who were once on probation shows us the probability that re-

demption with us will cease forever. Consignment to the company and doom of those who fell from heaven confirms this anticipation. Punishment is not the power of God and the wisdom of God unto salvation. Angels have not been made better by punishment. They have sunk to a level with the swine among the Gadarenes. Christ crucified is the power of God and the wisdom of God. "Neither is there salvation in any other."

WE ARE PRESENTED BY THIS SUBJECT WITH A VIEW OF THE FUTURE COMPANY OF THE GOOD.

We are going to dwell with the unfallen sons of God;—

"And heaven He gives us to possess
Whence those apostate angels fell."

Only two orders of beings, angels and men, are represented as being in heaven. This world seems unlikely to be repaired, at least for our use; for we are destined for the metropolis, where the throne of God and the Lamb is. "Father, I will that they whom thou hast given me be with me where I am." We are to behold His glory. We are to be the redeemed whom Christ came to save, and passed by the former occupants

of thrones in heaven. You will instruct the un-fallen sons of God how to love and praise Him who created them, and redeemed us to vie with them in service. Then do not fail to be of the number of the redeemed. Make your calling sure. Think what it must be to spend eternity with those who lost heaven and to be subjected to their taunts!

“Seize the kind promise while it waits,
And march to Zion’s heavenly gates,
Believe, and take the promised rest,
Obey, and be forever blest.”

XIV.

THE BROKEN IN HEART HEALED: THE STARS NUMBERED AND NAMED.

A THANKSGIVING DISCOURSE.

“He healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds.”

He telleth the number of the stars; he calleth them all by their names.”

— Psalm 147: 3, 4.

WITH New England people the histories of the Annual Thanksgiving days from childhood would be a good epitome of life. No recollections of childhood and youth are more vivid. The weeks of vacation, of visits paid or received, the excursions and sports, the preparations for the feast assailing every sense, the rich joy afforded by being sent on errands of love to the needy, the visits to the market-places where nature seemed to have brought together her stores as though for some great sacrifice, the throng of people and vehicles in the streets, showing that some great movement was going on,

the innocent satisfaction of being employed,—

“Something between a hindrance and a help,”

to do a little service the evening before the important day, the careful observance of the weather signs, the necessity of being detained from meeting by pressing need of your service at home, or for errands, or if you went to church, the demonstration in the singing seats, the pleasures of a good conscience in being in the house of God and not at the games on the Common, and the satisfaction in hearing something from the pulpit which was not so admonitory as usual, and then the grand climax around the table where feasting and merriment were succeeded by the household games till tired nature welcomed forgetfulness in sleep, all combined to make Thanksgiving Day to many of you as full of true enjoyment as probably any festival of any kind, in any nation, in any age of the world.

So you grew up, and each returning Thanksgiving was better than the last, and was heightened by the return of one and another who had gone out from the homestead. Then the little high chairs, long disused were brought down from the attic, with the forgotten cradle for one who like a diamond added to a full dress, was last, and least, and best.

We loved to hear the minister read some of

those five or six concluding Psalms, in which every imaginary thing is called upon to praise God, and which blazing forth with joy and thanksgiving, seemed like the last piece in the exhibition of fireworks on the other great festival of the year when the heavens were ablaze with the closing outburst of the demonstration. Perhaps never in childhood and youth was there more enjoyment crowded into the same space. And so, from year to year, the keen sense of pleasure grew more intense, being helped by memory and anticipation.

As we became older we were less turbulent in our joy; the duties and responsibilities of life looked in upon us, one by one, with serious face. Then came the first great sorrow, and at the festival there was a vacant chair, and you began to wonder why you ever thought Thanksgiving Day the best in the year.

Some of the family were far off and could not return, and one and another had gone, alas! for us, where thanksgiving had become their ceaseless employment. And when years were multiplied the festival had a large memorial tablet with inscriptions of lost ones, of changes, of sorrows, the recollection of all which, mixed with natural anticipations of thickening troubles, made Thanksgiving season a time of deep religious thought, never more profitable, yet clad in

russet garb instead of gay colors. At the same time, probably no one who has experienced all this and has made right improvement under it, will fail to testify that such sorrow was better than laughter, or that in the multitude of his thoughts within him, there are consolations and comforts which he would not exchange for hilarity, not even for the innocent pleasures of his childhood.

Let not the young think by any means that Thanksgiving Day turns into a day of mourning as we grow old; for on the contrary, it may be increasingly a day of deeper, richer joy. We always regret to have the season of blossoms end, and to look on the trees, recently laden with beauty and fragrance, of a sudden changed to a sombre state. But in that change, Spring has taken an exulting step. The trees are more precious than under their flowery crown.

For, as we advance in life, we have an accumulated debt of gratitude for the past, with its ever growing experience of lovingkindness and tender mercy; for capacity of enjoyment, for treasures not lost but laid up for us; for increased qualification to do good and to make others happy; nor can we forget the goodness of God to our childhood: the care taken of us, the friends we had, and special favors of preservation and blessing when we were heedless and

unthankful. So that when the moons of life wane we must remember that they are hastening to new moons, and that to them who fear God it will be so without end.

It will be safe to say, that amid all the festivity of these occasions, the most enviable happiness will be possessed by some who are reminded by them, of the various dealings of God with them in years past. Perhaps, if we should be called upon by different classes to hear their reasons for thanksgiving, none would be urged more earnestly than the wonderful ways in which the God of all comfort who comforteth them that are cast down, has comforted many who were in tribulation. It would seem to us among the wonderful things of God, how He healeth the broken in heart and bindeth up their wounds.

But what have the stars to do with the broken in heart, or comforts with the number and names of the heavenly bodies?

There is a remarkable conjunction of ideas in the two verses in the text. It seems a very sudden, abrupt transition from one to the other. Was it intended to be so? Or was there an association of ideas and a real connection between the thought of divine power in healing broken hearts, and the knowledge and ordering of the heavenly bodies?

Without attempting to answer this assuredly,

we are at liberty to examine whether there be any connection between the two by fair interpretation. Can we pass from one to the other by any perceived analogies?

How may it be made apparent that it is the same God that healeth the broken in heart and bindeth up their wounds, who telleth the number of the stars and calleth them all by their names?

I. IT REQUIRES THE SAME DIVINE KNOWLEDGE TO HEAL THE BROKEN IN HEART, AS TO TELL THE NUMBER OF THE STARS AND CALL THEM BY NAME.

When we say this, we speak far within the truth.

The number of the stars is to the divine mind a simple matter of arithmetic, however complicated they may be to our apprehension.

They stand apparent to Him whose all seeing eye takes them in at one view.

But before we proceed, let us consider what power it is to do this. For although to the unaided eye there are not more than six thousand heavenly bodies, yet science discloses a multitude in the hosts of heaven which is beyond comprehension, and even fancy cannot convey any adequate idea of them. The language of science here is itself

appalling. For when we see the expressions, thousands of millions of millions, we give up all attempt at grasping the sum. We should not feel it if the astronomer made a mistake of several millions. So when Sir William Herschel tells us that he has penetrated with his telescope seventy-five million times further than with the naked eye, and can see stars the nearest of which is fifteen billions of miles from us, that is, a hundred and seventy million times the distance of the sun from the earth, and that the light of some of the nearest neighbors to that star, traveling one hundred and ninety-two thousand miles a second, must have set out seven hundred thousand years ago; that in a portion of the Milky Way, not larger than one tenth of the moon's disc, he computed that there were twenty thousand stars, and that by the most moderate estimate the number of stars in the whole firmament reached by the telescope cannot be less than one hundred millions, and that beyond these there are clusters and nebulae which have not been resolved, and that each of the fixed stars which can be seen has a system of unseen worlds revolving about it, with great voids between them to keep the planets from disturbing each other, billions of miles being necessary for this purpose, we have an idea of creatorship, and of the extent of the universe, and of divine om-

niscience which, as David says, "is too wonderful" for us ; it is "high," we "cannot attain unto it." The astronomers themselves feel and confess their weakness. They wished to measure the space through which one of those distant heavenly bodies moved. Could they ascertain this, however small it might be, they could calculate its orbit, size, distance and rate of motion. They took for a base line the distance from Greenwich to the Cape of Good Hope, and drew imaginary lines from the extremities of that base line to get an angle ; but in vain ; there was no angle at the star, and the star did not seem to move. Their base line therefore proving too short, they took one represented by the diameter of the earth's orbit, that is measuring from the place where the earth is on the first of January, to where it is on the first of July, a distance of one hundred and ninety million six hundred thousand miles. Even then they could not see an appreciable movement in that most remote orb.

At last, in 1839, two astronomers succeeded in finding a movement in a star, but it was only one second in a degree. The base line was still too short for more distant explorations.

"Is there any number of his armies? and on whom doth not his light arise?" How can broken hearts, though every human heart were

broken, find any representation in such enormous measurements as these?

The answer is this: The God who can span from earth to the remotest world and then sweep that radius through all space, and number and name those heavenly bodies, can easily know every earthly mourner. He who follows that swift traveler in the heavens, Arcturus, with his fifty-four miles each second, or three times faster than our earth, knows our wanderings, and all the succession of our sorrows.

There may not have been more broken hearts than there are stars; yet the number is such that none but the power which numbers the heavenly bodies can comprehend them. But in those hearts there have been more wounds which needed to be healed than there are stars. It is not so great a thing to number the stars as to search the hearts and try the reins of the children of men.

II. THE SAME DIVINE WISDOM WHICH ARRANGES THE HEAVENS, OVERRULES OUR INDIVIDUAL AFFAIRS.

We may be tempted to think that there is no plan or reason in the things which happen to us, for they sometimes throw us into confusion, our desolation is apparently wild and reckless. But

it is easy to show that all which happens to us is ordered by a plan, notwithstanding the seeming littleness of our affairs when compared with the extent of the universe and the number of worlds. Indeed the astronomical view rather tends to dishearten us unless we call in the aid of faith. To help our faith, look at the minute things which God has made; we see in them the same God at work as in the celestial spheres. The microscope reveals a hidden color of great beauty on a beetle's wing, curious form and order on the scale of a fish, prismatic colors on a particle of dust, architectural design in the tiniest shell; which all the worlds above us do not surpass as products of divine handicraft. We feel the power of God in the revelations of the microscope as much as in those of the telescope. Some who have been most distinguished in the use of the telescope go further, and say that the microscope by its disclosures has affected them more than has the telescope. Perhaps this was the effect of contrast, but surely we know of nothing in God which affects us more than that the High and Lofty One that inhabiteth eternity and who dwells in the high and holy place declares that He dwells also with him who trembles at His word. If God chooses to manifest His glory in this way, surely we must not make objection. We must not say to our Lord, "Thou

shalt never wash my feet." Especially when Christ Himself teaches us that not a sparrow falleth to the ground without our Father, and that the very hairs of our head are all numbered, we must not hesitate to think that the Creator of the worlds is to each of us the God of providence, that He "telleteth" our "wanderings," puts our "tears into" His "bottle," and that they are "in" His "book." So that each one may confidently say, "When my spirit was overwhelmed within me, Thou knewest my path." Nor can we refuse to believe in the perfect knowledge and watchful providence of God in our affairs when we read, "For there is not a word in my tongue, but lo! O Lord thou knowest it altogether." "Thou understandest my thoughts afar off."

The God who comprehends the spaces of the universe and peoples them, is not only able to comprehend us, but He who has made order His first law among the spheres, has reduced every thing relating to us into a wise arrangement in which there is nothing confused. We may therefore feel assured that He who has made of this seeming infinitude of worlds one great system, and creates every atom by a perfect pattern and in reference to a general design, has also a wise purpose in breaking and binding up our hearts.

Probably that which will most affect us here-

after with a sense of divine wisdom and power as well as goodness, will be our personal history. We shall be better acquainted with this than with any thing else. We shall be able to judge concerning this better than with things foreign to us, and perhaps this will be our chief wonder, that the God who made Arcturus, Orion, Pleiades, and the chambers of the South, did actually consult for each of us; that He who sends the comet on his errands round this measureless space and secures its return at the appointed minute did watch over the heedless steps of your childhood, and that He who maketh peace in his high places, so that these worlds, many of them crossing each other's track, do not interfere, has made your orbit, and had regard to all its dangerous exposures, and brought you safely on your way, while not for one moment you had an absolute control of yourself, or defence against destruction.

We shall see that stupendous as the universe is in its plan, the history of our redemption up to the hour when you will be presented faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, involves more that is astonishing than the stars, and that He who is "the brightness of the Father's glory," and is now "upholding all things by the word of His power," by Himself purged your sins, and then, and not till then as

God and man, sat down on the right hand of the majesty on high, thus declaring human redemption to be the chief of all His works.

Let every one, therefore, who has been called to great sorrow, rejoice that God has been occupied with his affairs even though it be by affliction. For in the creation of worlds, no doubt there is great confusion at first. "The earth was without form and void and darkness was upon the face of the deep," and a spectator might have thought that annihilation was coming sooner than order and beauty.

We feel that our losses and sorrows will destroy us; but not so if we love God. We are "of more value" not only than "many sparrows," but many worlds. Indeed those billions of fixed stars with all their planets considered as mere matter, are not worth your soul. They cannot love God, nor can they glorify Him as much as your redemption and salvation. Were the question to arise whether to save you all those orbs shall perish, the answer has already been given, in that He who made them has given Himself for you, and "He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?" "He that built the house hath more honor than the house;" therefore, if the Maker of suns and planets gave Himself for

your sins, if you, every time you pray, make mention of a sacrifice for your soul more costly than all this astronomy, do not think that when it is said that He who binds up broken hearts numbers the stars and calls them all by their names, there is any exaggeration. If there be exaggeration it is on the other side, in comparing the material universe with your incomparable being, as a son, an heir, of God, a joint heir with Christ.

When we travel throughout this great expanse of suns and planets, wearing, each of us, a glorified body like unto the Son of God, we shall perhaps find that to be a member of the human family redeemed by Christ, "which is the head of all principality and power, is the chief distinction among the creatures of God.

Reflect on the wisdom and power of the Most High in the ways by which He has comforted you. He has compensated you for losses, or made them the means of good which is worth all it cost. He has shed abroad in your heart a peace which passeth all understanding. He has made some of your sorrows like a discovered star, a centre to some system of truth, or new order of things in your life revolving around that affliction. None but God could do this, "who turneth the shadow of death into the morning," who giveth "joy for mourning and

the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness."

The more we reflect upon it the less shall we be surprised at the connection of these two verses seemingly so unlike. For the God who may have sowed the year for you with sorrow, is the God who planted the heavens with those heavenly bodies which make up the several constellations, all having a plan and order, as in the purpose of God your trials have, which at last will evolve themselves into a cluster to the praise of Him who holds the seven stars in His right hand.

It is better to have hearts broken, and to have God heal them than that they should not have been broken, better to be wounded and have God bind us up, than not to have been wounded. Looking back upon our troubles and seeing how they helped us on to heaven, and finding again, as many will, all whom they lost for a season, we shall say that if there be one cause of thanksgiving above another in our personal experience, it is, that a faithful God broke our hearts to heal them; wounded us, to bind us up.

But, if we have not been afflicted, can we on such an occasion as this; can we, in view of unmingled happiness in the past, derive instruction and comfort from this theme?

Yes, for if you love God, losing these blessings will work for your good.

We are sometimes made to sigh even when we are merry. "Surely in laughter the heart is sad." On every annual festival we involuntarily repeat, What changes another year may bring ! But they who love God are sure that nothing will happen to them by His appointment which will not be for the purpose of enlarging the sphere of their spiritual vision. Christian peace and joy, therefore, are well founded ; they are rational. It is not fanciful to suggest that every miraculous gift bestowed on the apostles has a spiritual counterpart in the experience of all who are born of the Spirit.

Our Saviour, speaking of His own marvellous works, says to the apostles, "And greater works than these shall ye do, because I go to my Father."

That we do not err in supposing that there is a designed connection between these two passages, and that the contemplation of the heavens is here designed to illustrate the wisdom and power of God in His treatment of the afflicted whom He loves, we have only to recall the following words : "Lift up your eyes on high," says the Great God, "behold, who hath created these things? that bringeth out their hosts by number ; He calleth them all by their names by the greatness of His might, for that He is strong in power, not one faileth. Why sayest

thou, O Jacob, and speakest, O Israel, my way is hid from the Lord, and my judgment is passed over from my God? Hast thou not known, hast thou not heard that the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainted not neither is weary? There is no searching of His understanding. He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might He increaseth strength."

XV.

THE REMOVAL OF ISRAEL'S CLOUD TO THE REAR.

"And the angel of God, which went before the camp of Israel, removed and went behind them; and the pillar of the cloud went from before their face, and stood behind them." — Exodus 14: 19.

ON the border of the Red sea the children of Israel lifted up their eyes, and behold the Egyptians marched after them, and they were sore afraid. Six hundred chosen chariots were there and with them all the chariots of Egypt, and captains over every one of them. Destruction seemed sure. The Israelites were an undisciplined host; their wives and children were mingled with them; no munitions of war; a desert on either side; the Red sea in front; all Egypt in pursuit infuriated by the plagues which the God of these Hebrews had sent upon them. The faith of Israel gave way to despair. They said to Moses, "Because there were no graves in Egypt hast thou taken us away to die in the wilderness? Is not this the word that we did tell thee in Egypt, saying, Let us alone that we may serve the Egyptians? For it had been bet-

ter for us to serve the Egyptians than that we should die in the wilderness." Little did they dream, however, that they were brought there to be a spectacle to the world through all ages; they did not remember that man's extremity is God's opportunity.

The pillar of cloud which had been to them a pioneer in the desert now began to countermarch, and took its position at the entrance of the camp. Dark as a rising storm to the Egyptians the cloud shed light upon Israel, "So that the one came not near to the other all night." The leader of Israel, by divine command, stretched his hand over the sea and straightway the waters saw it and fled; the bottom of the sea, which for ages had not seen the light, became a floor for their feet, a solid road for their beasts of burden; the waters stood up like a heap on either hand. "They went through the flood on foot, there did they rejoice in Him." But as much as they enjoyed the wall of waters on either hand and the marvellous faith which gave them firm foothold over the bottom of the deep, they were ever thinking of the whole military force of Egypt in their rear. What if they should be suddenly overwhelmed by horses and chariots? These walls of water hemmed them in; flight was impossible. Has God dried up the sea to make a grave for Israel? With an eye of faith one and

another looked behind to the pillar of fire which had now planted itself in their rear. God was there, the angel Jehovah who smote Egypt in their first-born, whose mercy endureth forever. While before them the light from the cloud reached to the further shore, the cloud itself formed an impenetrable veil between Israel and the pursuers: no sight of horses and chariots affrighted them any more; they saw their enemies only when the returning waters washed their dead bodies to the shore.

All this was effected by the removal of the pillar of cloud from before them to a position in their rear, mercifully bringing darkness between them and their enemies. The veil hung down to keep the pursued from seeing the pursuers, while it hid them from their enemies.

Some of the painters, and an artist in the mother country who has illustrated the "Pilgrim's Progress," have had wonderful skill in throwing light forward and making darkness behind it. But no pencil is like the hand of Him who at creation divided the light from the darkness; which He did here, making the past dark and the onward way bright. He can let down a veil from heaven to earth, and on one side of it there shall be darkness which can be felt, and on the other side light.

Though Israel had seen the power of God in

the plagues of Egypt, we doubt if any one or all of those plagues affected them as did the removal of that pillared cloud from their front to their rear at this crisis in their history, closing up to their eyes the terrifying sight of their enemies, and to the enemies all sight of their helpless victims.

This passage leads me to speak of GOD OUR REARWARD. It is God alone who can make the past a source of peace and comfort. We think much of the future ; we desire greatly to have an assurance that all will be well with us in time to come. But do we sufficiently reflect how much this depends on having the past mercifully considered by our Almighty Friend? We accept with gratitude the promise, "The Lord shall go before thee;" but do we fully consider how important the concluding part of that passage is : — "and be thy rearward?"

Never, in any stage of their history, did Israel need God to go before them more than when with the Red Sea in front and Pharaoh pursuing them, they needed that God should be their rearward. Our happiness depends much at times on having the angel of God "which went before" us seem to remove and stand behind us. For

I. WE OFTEN NEED TO BE DEEPLY IM-

PRESSED WITH THE MEMORY OF PAST BLESSINGS.

Perhaps at the present time, we have, and in coming days shall have, occasion to recall the interposition of God in our past history. There will be times when we shall only need that God should do for us according to His past mercies to make us perfectly happy; times when we shall say, "Lord, where are Thy former loving-kindnesses which Thou swarest unto David in Thy truth?"

The burden of many a prayer will be, "O continue Thy loving-kindness unto them that know Thee." Time after time it will be the richest comfort in trial, to recall the favors which God did for us in days gone by; "I was brought low and He helped me," will be the all-powerful rebuke to every fear. We are brought into straits oftentimes merely for God to show His power, or His wisdom, or His surprising goodness; and therefore it is wise at such times, instead of murmuring, to think of past experience, saying, "How can the God who did such wonderful things for me, fail me now?"

The 136th Psalm has twenty-six verses, each of which ends with this: "For His mercy endureth forever." We feel ashamed when we read how Israel said, "Can God furnish a table

in the wilderness? Behold He smote the rock that the waters gushed out, and the streams overflowed; can He give bread also? Can He provide flesh for His people?" We acquiesce in the punishment which followed, and then, perhaps, we sin in like manner. O that the cloud would go behind us now and then, to keep us from forgetting all His benefits. The remembrance of the past is sometimes as good as new mercies. We need and still shall need to be impressed with the memory of past blessings.

II. WE NEED THE PILLAR OF CLOUD BEHIND US FOR OUR PROTECTION FROM THE EVIL CONSEQUENCES OF THE PAST.

It availed nothing to Israel that God had brought them out of Egypt with a stretched out arm, if they were now to fall a prey before the pursuing army of Pharaoh. So they cried out, "It had been better for us to serve the Egyptians than that we should die in the wilderness." Then the cloud rose and went behind them to intercept any evil consequences of their flight from Egypt. Thus we shall need, in future, protection from the mistakes, follies, sins of the past. We may have already erred, and the consequences, if not arrested, may be a Pharaoh and his host. Therefore, let the angel of the

covenant go behind us, and let the fiery pillar stand there, to prevent us from direful memories. For it is safe to say that a large part of human misery arises from regretful recollections.

We would gladly atone for hasty words and rash actions; but perhaps the wish is vain. We omitted some duty and we feel the effects. We took a wrong step, and it led into snares. We gave occasion for hatred, perhaps lasting enmity. What would we not give if we could forget some unpleasant passage in our behavior! Must we go through life with a Pharaoh and his chariots and their captains behind us? We feel it were better for us to die than to live. But we should gain nothing by dying; we should retrieve nothing, unless we should sleep in Jesus, and be at peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. "Son! remember" this. For otherwise there would be added to these dreadful recollections which we invoke the grave to bury, tenfold more which a quickened memory would bring to mind, enmities, sense of loss, partings with loved ones, indented in our memories. It is better to live and make memory our friend through the blood of Jesus.

There are also remembered joys, and it is the nature of memory to make remembered joys the source of sadness unless faith in Jesus and hope through grace be in active exercise. Worse than

all there is the recollection of our sins. With the memory of them there mingles self-reproach perhaps, exceeding everything else in our recollection of them. Better for us always if we could then say, "Against Thee, Thee only have I sinned and done this evil in Thy sight." Better for us to fall into the hands of God with sorrow for sin. For God can forgive us, and does forgive us many a time when we do not forgive ourselves; our pride is wounded, we see we are not humbled, when we are unwilling to be forgiven. God can confer no greater favor upon us in the way of making us happy, than by standing behind us with the tokens of forgiveness, declaring His righteousness for the remission of the sins that are past, through the forbearance of God. Were we only as just in our intercourse with God as we are with men, in one respect, it would be for our comfort. For are we not uneasy when a man has inadvertently paid his bill the second time? Do we not make haste and send him word that the account was settled once? We are not willing to sleep till we have returned the money; we cannot endure to be twice paid. God may be said to have such feelings toward us; in proof of which hear these words: "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness;" — "faithful and

just,"—implying that there would be injustice in His exacting any thing of one who has accepted the atonement, pleaded the substitution which has been made. It is wonderful that we may say this; but "having boldness by the blood of Jesus" we may.

Some will inquire "Is it not presumption in you to say that? Do you think that confessing our sins lays God under obligation?" I reply, He lays Himself under obligation; I fear that you are timid, unwilling to take God at His word.

There would be a scriptural hope of acceptance with God in many, if they would believe this simple truth, that confession of sin and acceptance of offered pardon through Christ saves the soul at once and forever. Divine justice will not suffer itself to be paid twice for sin. The reason is, Christ died for us; and "in that He died, he died unto sin once." Some think that they cannot have the pleasure of repentance if they are forgiven. Let them know that they do not repent at all till they are forgiven. "Return unto Me for I have redeemed Thee."—Jeremiah 44: 22. Repentance after pardon, is not only proper; but there is no repentance so deep as that which comes with a sense of forgiveness. We see this in a child to whom we say, I forgive you. How the little heart breaks, how the

tears flow, how passionately the arms enfold your neck. So through the Christian life. We all testify that we never have felt such sorrow for sin as when at the foot of the cross we embrace the feet which were nailed there for our sins. Rowland Hill said, "If when I lay down my pilgrim staff at the gate of heaven I should drop a tear, it would be at taking leave forever of that sweet, safe, profitable companion, Repentance."

There is less danger of conviction of sin being counterfeit than anything else. We may be deceived when a child tells us how he loves the Saviour; the child may err in thinking its emotions under the pathetic representations of the Saviour's appeals, to be Christian love. But when we have seen a child rationally convinced of its sinfulness and yet weeping with gratitude with a sense of forgiveness, seldom have we erred in believing its repentance to be genuine. Repentance is the sorrow of love. If we confess our sins, pleading the satisfaction which Christ has made and which God has accepted, and then do not believe that we are forgiven, we are paying justice twice; and that is unbelief. Not believing, after all that God through Christ has done for us, is surely wrong. To say "I have not repented enough," shows that we are trying to make atonement for sin. You cannot do it;

even eternal misery would not be an adequate satisfaction for sin, for it is not the sacrifice which divine justice has appointed. The Word made flesh is the sacrifice. A soul that pleads it, need not say, "I have not repented enough." You never can repent enough as a satisfaction to divine justice, for repentance is not an atonement. It is a great mystery, an adorable mystery, it never ceases to amaze the mind of a believer that trusting in the atonement satisfies the conscience of a sinner at once, and he cannot explain why it is. Dr. Watts has expressed the idea,

Jesus, my Great High Priest,
Offered his blood and died ;
My guilty conscience seeks
No sacrifice beside.
His powerful blood did once atone,
And now it pleads before the throne.

Why a guilty conscience which has found the sacrifice of Christ, is at once quieted, as every believer testifies, is a question which no doubt the inquisitive Israelites might have asked about the brazen serpent, by faith in which, the people were restored. Therefore desist at once from trying to "feel more," as many say ; as though that could atone for you. Believe this : If you accept the atonement of Christ as a free gift, you

are saved. One might stake his own personal hope of acceptance with God, if he could, on the truth of this declaration, that every one who confesses to God his sinfulness and accepts Jesus Christ as his substitute, has repented, is justified, "shall not come unto condemnation, but is passed from death unto life."

Therefore you may look behind you over the whole of life, and see the pillar of cloud moving over all, standing behind all, shedding its beautiful radiance over all your history, as though it were saying, "Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died." One may boldly plead for pardon before he is conscious of having satisfied himself with sorrow for sin. Sorrow for sin without looking at Christ is self-righteousness.

The greatest experience in Israel's history, forever mentioned in their songs of thanksgiving, was this act of grace, bestowed upon them when they were unbelieving, weak, ready to despair, seemingly on the brink of ruin:—wonderful sight! the angel of the Lord breaking camp and going to their rear! that beautiful-meteor, the guiding cloud, sailing back over their six hundred thousand fighting men, powerless as their infants, while Egypt was pouring out its swarming myriads to swallow them up. So, my soul! thy sins and the hosts of hell are ready this day to destroy thee; but the angel of the covenant

has not forsaken thee; faith can see Him, as plainly as Israel beheld Him going to their rear to stand between them and danger; are not His promises a pillar of cloud to you, and do they not stand, between you and the past, saying, "I, even I, am He that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins?"

This removal, mentioned in the text, of the angel Jehovah and His pavilion of cloud from the front to the rear of Israel's camp, on the occasion of their going out of Egypt, is peculiarly fitted to instruct us in reviewing the past. So it instructed Israel going out of Egypt into the untrodden desert. Good people in Israel must have been deeply affected to see that wonderful meteor which had led their way, taking its position behind them. They must have felt safe, as safe as omnipotence could make them, seeing that fiery sign hanging down between them and Egypt. No dark night or tempest had yet been able to quench or even eclipse its preternatural light. Egypt finds it as dark as Israel had found it luminous. The Israelites were baptized unto Moses by this evolution of the cloud and by his guidance of them through the sea; we would have been willing to predict their confidence in him their leader, until they had reached the Promised Land. And as for God, He, by one act

passing from front to rear in that critical hour, the cloud shedding darkness on Pharoah, and light on Israel, the waters too, standing up on either side of them, stretched His line upon them, and His hand gave the sea His decree that the waters should not pass over.

Of all that host that came out of Egypt by Moses, only two adults reached Canaan; because they believed not God, but forsook the counsel of the Most High. Therefore, God kept the nation wandering forty years in the wilderness; unbelief postponed the settlement of Israel in Canaan for a whole generation.

Now I will point you to several things and ask you a question. See that angel who is destroying all the first-born of man and beast in Egypt pausing before each door where the hyssop branch had sprinkled the passover blood, leaving the little company within unharmed. Take your place in imagination where you can see the hosts of Egypt struggling in the waters; see the light thrown forward on the hindmost of Israel's company arriving safe ashore. Now as you join in the song of Moses there, or follow the company of women with their timbrels, this is my question; Are you not willing to make prophecy that a people with such a God is sure be a nation of believers? For still look on: Nation after nation melts away before them; Jordan emu-

lating the Red sea, and the people passing out of its dried bed; from which twelve stones are taken, for an altar of witnesses. See them going round a great city in silence six days; on the seventh day blowing rams' horns, and without a javelin thrown, those walls fall as by an earthquake; a great city is made defenceless in a moment. Israel is soon in possession, not only of that city but of the land of the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Gerizzites, Hivites and Jebusites. O, had they hearkened to the voice of God and walked in His way!

We cannot conceive of the national greatness to which that people would have attained; or of the progress which they would have made in the arts of life, discoveries, inventions, and all that can ennoble the human race. Contemptuous word of inspiration, "their carcasses fell in the wilderness." Carrying out their unbelief they killed the Prince of life, of whom they were the betrayers and murderers, and they have never repented of it; they are now in their dispersion a standing monument of unbelief and its consequences. God help us to do contrary to their example. We are worse than they if we are unbelievers in Christian congregations. Believe God. Believe on His Son whom He has sent. Obey His gospel. Keep His commandments.

And now, Angel of that covenant! stand we pray you over against the past; cover our sins with the atoning blood; remind us of past mercies; be a shield to us against the evil consequences of our sins and of our follies; make the way behind us a Red Sea, burying unpleasant recollections, fears, transgressions; then go before us on our heavenward way.

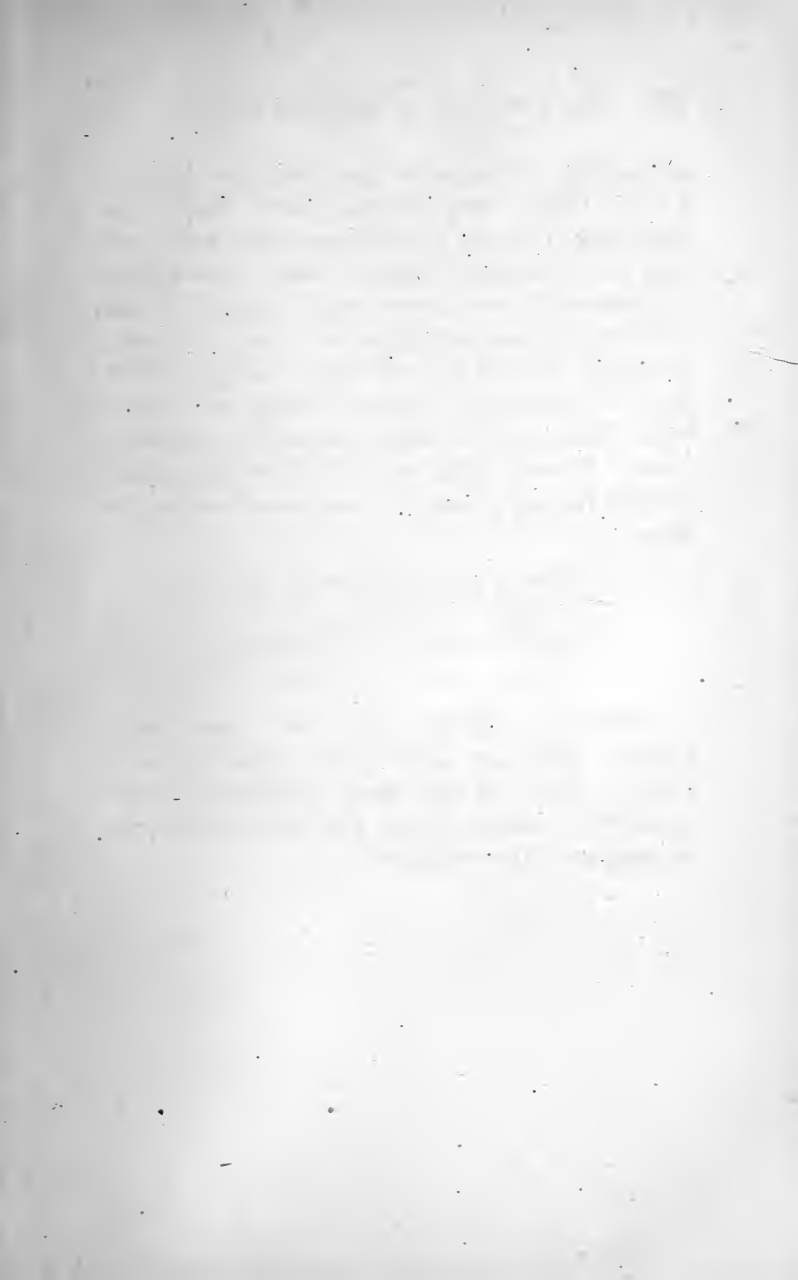
Finally, *This rearward angel and this pillar of cloud seem to bid me to say to believers, It shall be well with you.* For these two things are true concerning all who believe in Jesus. First, You have not seen your best days; and, Secondly, You never will. Never through eternity, will you arrive at that summit of bliss from which you will anticipate declension. Onward and upward is to be your way. "Thou wilt show me the path of life; in Thy presence is fulness of joy; at Thy right hand are pleasures forevermore." Such is the prospect of all who repent and believe.

To all others remaining in unbelief it is equally true, *First*, You have not seen your worst days. No angel of the covenant is standing behind you; for you have made no covenant with God. No pillared cloud has been leading you; uncovenanted mercy, liable at any time to leave you, good fortune, luck, chance, is your only security. Bitter as your sufferings may have been, there

are greater in store if you continue without Christ. Great as your losses have been, you have more to lose; bereavements can make you still more desolate; enmities more excruciating are laid up for you; your way is into a Red sea with the waters standing round to bury you; and, *Secondly*, As you have not yet seen your worst days, so, remaining without Christ, you never will. There will be always something worse to come. Prevent this by immediate acceptance of that Gospel which you have heard so long in vain.

Now, he who with one act of faith
 Shall confidently say,
 I look for pardon through Thy blood,
 Is sayed, saved now; alway.

“AND THE SPIRIT AND THE BRIDE SAY,
 COME. AND LET HIM THAT HEARETH SAY,
 COME. AND LET HIM THAT IS ATHIRST COME.
 AND WHOSOEVER WILL, LET HIM TAKE THE
 WATER OF LIFE FREELY.”



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